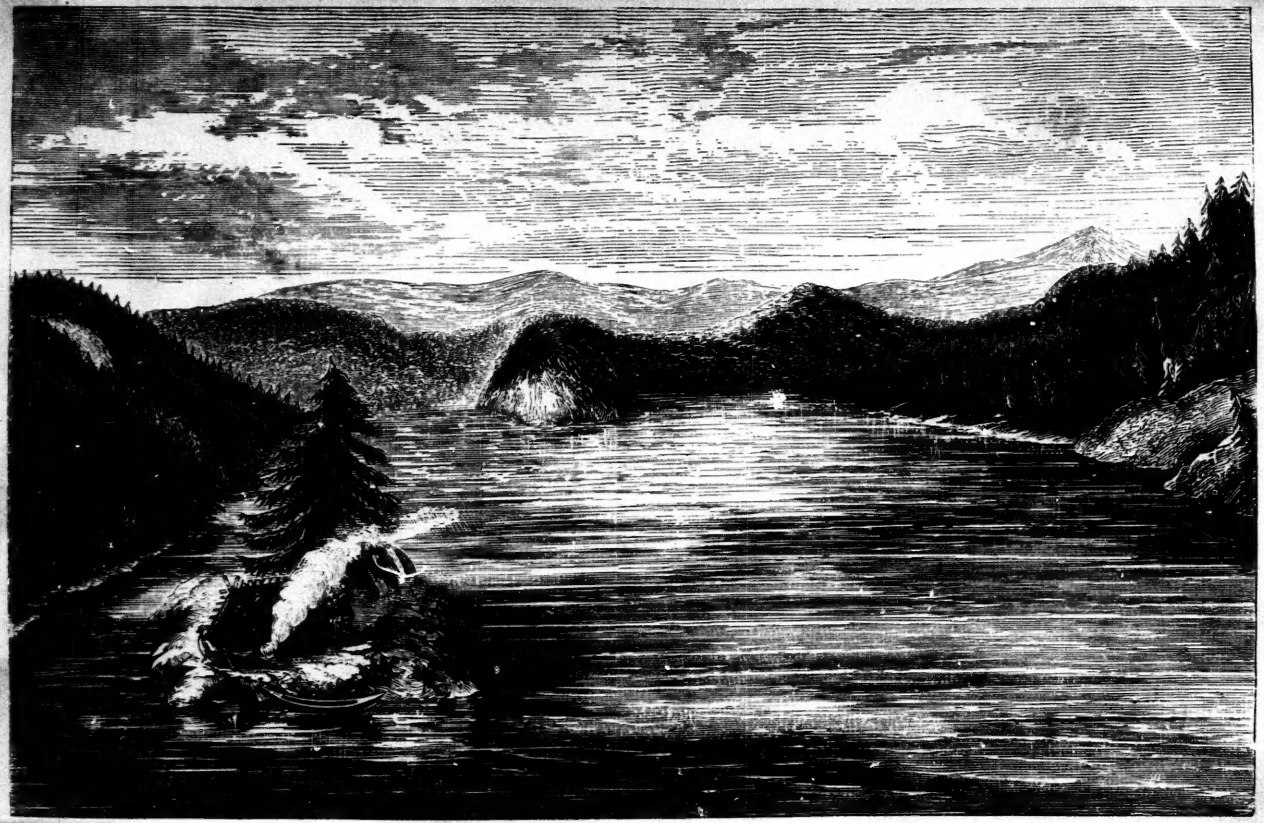

SCENES ON PACIFIC SHORES;

WITH

A TRIP ACROSS SOUTH AMERICA.

BY

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PREFACE.

In offering to the Public these few imperfect sketches of what the Author saw, did, and heard, while sojourning in the far West, he desires not to lay claim to originality—for he believes that many similar incidents are far better described elsewhere by more able pens than his, and he has trod on no new ground—but to rest his plea for their acceptance on whatever merit they may possess as being, to some extent, the records of a naval officer's life while serving on the Pacific station. He made little or no effort to collect information about persons and places, which a more experienced writer would have done, but contented himself with simply jotting down his own experiences and thoughts, and any little incident communicated to him in an ordinary way which he considered might prove interesting. If he may have been a little inaccurate in some

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statements, it is only in trivial points, for which he would ask the indulgence of the reader, for there is no intention to "extenuate or set down ought in malice."

It may be objected, and perhaps rightly, that he has entered too much into particulars of a certain kind, so he must plead in the words of honest Corporal Trim,—"I believe, an' it please your honour," quoth the Corporal, "that, if it had not been for the quantity of brandy we set fire to every night, and the claret and cinnamon with which I plied your honour off"—"And the Geneva, Trim," added my uncle Toby, "which did us more good than all"—"I verily believe," continued the Corporal, "we had both, an' it please your honour, left our lives in the trenches, and been buried in them, too."

SCENES ON PACIFIC SHORES.

CHAPTER I.

"A Castilla y a Leon
Nuevo mundo dió Colon."

Not many years since, it was ordered, by an economical Board of Admiralty, that the officers and crew of the flag-ship on the Pacific station were to be relieved, and a new ship's company was sent out in a line-of-battle ship (an almost disused class of vessel, except for such purposes) to Panama, which Isthmus they were to cross by train and take possession of the flag-ship, the old crew of which was to return again to "Merry England" in the line-of-battle ship from Aspinwall. Amongst the new "lot" was the writer of these pages, who will hereafter be distinguished by the personal pronoun "I," and who, if the reader has enough spare time to follow him, will introduce him or her to scenes and people in the "Far West," and endeavour to interest to the best of his powers.

As we leave the familiar waters of the Atlantic behind, and approach the mighty continent—large

districts of which are still new, and waiting to surrender the riches of their mountains and plains to enterprising man—on which I hope to spend many days and see something of its forests, prairies and streams, and also to have a peep at brother Jonathan in his own abode, I shall commence this journal and jot down any incidents of travel, and of "flood and field," which it may be interesting to refer back to in future years.

It was in the month of January, 1870, we approached the shores of America. To many of us it was a first visit, and, therefore, we eagerly watched the nearing land, to gain an early impression of the New World. The view of Colon, or Aspinwall, as the Americans always call it, did not impress us very deeply with a sense of its importance, its only claim to notice being that it is the terminus of the railway, which was, perhaps, the most enterprising undertaking ever accomplished, until the Union Pacific Railway was constructed. All that could be seen from the ship were a few houses standing amid some cocoa-nut trees, on a low shore, along which a heavy surf was breaking—a long shed and buildings on the right, showing the position of the railway station. The neighbouring country was covered with a mass of thick, impenetrable-looking jungle, spread over ranges of low hills. The bay swarmed with sharks, several of which we caught while lying in the roads. To facilitate the disembarking of the

large number of men we had on board—nearly eight hundred—we went alongside one of the wharves, and thus had the benefit of a railway running almost up to the ship's side, and were able to put all the baggage and stores on the luggage cars as they were landed.

Soon after the old ship had thus settled to rest from the fatigues of her journey from England, some of us sallied forth to have a look at the town. Drinking bars and hotels were the predominant features in its long and one-sided street, and dirt, curs, and ugly negroes abounded. Not long ago this place was periodically the scene of great bustle and activity; the hotels crowded, the negroes, whom we now see loitering idly about, busily employed as porters, and trains travelling across the Isthmus laden with passengers and freight. This was before the railway from New York to San Francisco was finished, and when great tides of people flowed to and from California. In the first six months of '68, thirty-six thousand passengers passed through Aspinwall. The steamers from New York were frequently so crowded that there was not sufficient accommodation in the town for them, and often the steamers from Panama to San Francisco were not large enough to carry them on. I have been told of men offering three and four times the passage money, in order that they might not be left behind.

Aspinwall is situated on a small island some three

miles in circumference, which is divided from the mainland partly by lagoons and partly by swampy morasses, which render its climate a most unhealthy one for Europeans.

The Monday following our arrival, the first division of officers and men started to cross the Isthmus. We fell in on the wharf alongside the ship, and marched up to the cars, the drums and fifes leading. It was something new to Jack, crossing an isthmus by trains *en masse*, and everyone was in the highest spirits. All were in, the engine gave its hoarse whistle, and we slowly glided away from our remaining men and officers, through a crowd of yellow, chattering negroes, along the street of Colon—for the line occupies its centre—where, in the balcony of an hotel, we saw the flag-captain—a general favourite. Cheer after cheer saluted him as we passed, but the train moved quickly on, and, in a short time, we took what seemed likely to be our last gaze at the Atlantic for some years.

The Panama Railway was commenced in 1848, and finished in about seven years, after many difficulties and interruptions had been met with, and successfully surmounted. The cost per mile was something over thirty-three thousand pounds, and it is said that a life was lost for every sleeper laid down. The greatest difficulty was obtaining labourers, for the climate was dreadful, and the

powerful malaria arising from swamps and masses of decaying vegetation was the deadly foe to be encountered. Natives, Chinese, Negroes, Irish, Germans, and Americans, were successively brought to complete this mighty undertaking, and to nearly all it proved fatal; for few, very few, out of the hundreds who worked on that perilous railway, survived. There were men breathing fever, wading swamps, fighting pumas and alligators, eaten by noxious insects, evading boa-constrictors and other reptiles, all for a couple of dollars a day. Well may it be called the "almighty dollar!" Negroes from the Southern states, and workmen from America, bore the climate best, and finished the work.

The vegetation surrounding the line was most beautiful. All the wild magnificent grouping and colouring, only to be seen in the tropics, was here visible to perfection. A rich, dense mass of mangoe and palm, of oranges, limes, and plantains, and thousands of shrubs and parasites, grew in glorious confusion, while here and there we came across a long half-hidden lagoon curving amongst the hills, and occasionally a glade of green grass enhanced the scene. How the enterprising Vasco de Balboa ever crossed that Isthmus seems a mystery; what indomitable perseverance he must have possessed! I can well understand his falling on his knees, when he reached the summit of the hill from which the Pacific was visible, and thanking God for prospering his

work so far, and allowing him to be the first European who had gazed on the peaceful blue waters of the wide-spreading western ocean. Doubtless a good deal of satisfaction at having his troubles almost over must have mingled with his expressed thanks. "He bravely accomplished his object, and took possession of the sea and all its bordering lands—having first waded into it, sword in hand—for His Most Christian Majesty, the King of Castile and Leon, his heirs and successors for ever." *

But to return to our train full of blue jackets. The line at first led through low swampy jungle, and, at times, over almost shaky morasses. We soon, however, commenced the ascent of the low range of hills which runs the whole length of the Isthmus. The carriages appeared old and rickety, and vibrated tremendously, although going at a slow pace. About the time we gained the summit of the ridge, the train coming across with the first half of the old company of the flag-ship met us, and the two trains stopped abreast of each other for some minutes. There was great cheering, excitement, shaking of hands among old shipmates, and enquiries about friends at home, from neighbours who had recently left; bottles were passed and re-passed from train to train, and not half the little acts by which the men expressed their goodwill towards one

* "West of the Mississippi." Richardson.

another was performed when the two trains separated and continued their respective journeys. We made a descent of about 300 feet, the incline being steeper on this side than the other, and found ourselves in the station, or under the railway sheds, of Panama.

The old town of Panama, which was situated some miles to the southward of the modern one, is barely discoverable now—some ruined walls and grass-grown mounds being the only relics. Yet it was here the first Christian settlement was formed—the first impress of European footsteps made on the sands of the great Pacific.

Vasco de Balboa, although the discoverer of the passage across the Isthmus of Darien and the existence of the rich countries of Peru and Chili, on the shores of the western ocean, was not fated to reap the benefits of his daring achievements, or to be amongst the first settlers on that distant shore. Pedrarias, who, though his father-in-law, was his deadliest enemy, took occasion to prefer a charge of disloyalty to the king against him, and, being governor at Santa Maria, had the power of appointing the judges. Sentence of death was pronounced on this brave and noble man, and, although every exertion to mitigate the punishment was made by the colonists, including even the men who had passed his sentence, his father-in-law continued inexorable, and Balboa was executed; and the

Spaniards beheld with astonishment and sorrow the death of a man who was universally esteemed and admired, and considered more capable than any other of their commanders of forming and accomplishing great designs. Pedrarias, notwithstanding the injustice of his proceedings, was shielded from the punishment he merited, and soon after obtained permission to leave Santa Maria with his colonists, and form a settlement at Panama, the other side of the Isthmus—thus it was that in the year 1517 the old town was founded. The modern town might well have been built even at a date prior to that I have mentioned—it was built, I believe, in the seventeenth century—so truly may it be said that its glory has departed; what we behold to-day makes us but think of it as it must have been in former times. There stands its remarkable Cathedral, covered with moss, and showing many signs of decay; the front bears traces of having been at one time very handsome, and has the usual number of images of saints let into niches; but these sanctified old ladies and gentlemen look considerably the worse for time and wear. There is the old crumbling wall surrounding the town, which must, in bygone days, have rendered it a place of great strength. There are the remains of monasteries and convents, towers and strongholds, and evidences of past wealth converted to the use of present mendicancy on every hand, and all—save the European

quarter – alike bearing the marks of dilapidation and decay, The principal show of active life is at the American liquor bars, and at the landing-place where coolies are unloading lighters. There are many Jamaica negroes both at Panama and at Colon, the remains of the numbers imported to construct the railway; they all speak English, and do the work of porters and servants. I was very much amused one day, while waiting at the landing-place, by a disreputable-looking gentleman of the race of Ham coming up to me, in an independent manner, and saying: "What man-of-war dat out dare, sar?" I told him her name. "Is she English?" continued my interrogator. "Yes," I replied. "What she do here, sar?" he inquired. I gave him a short account, when he said, with a manner half condescending and half apologetic: "You see, sar, me British subject, and feel great interest in English affairs, and wish to hear how she do, sar." After which he stuck his dirty old make-shift for a hat on one side of his head and walked off, evidently feeling the full importance of being a British subject, and hailing from the free and independent land of Jamaica.

From Panama we went to Tobago, one of the many islands with which the bay of Panama is studded, to take in coal and water, it being used as a coal depôt on account of the depth of water close to the shore, and there is a beautiful clear spring

just behind the little village. The island is very pretty and picturesque, and produces large quantities of fruit for the Panama market. Not long ago, the Pacific Steam Navigation Company had their chief depôt here—their factories, store-houses, and a large staff of skilled mechanics and engineers, but they have now removed to Callao, and empty buildings are all that remain. There are great quantities of sea-fowl in the bay, as the many barren rocks and small islands afford peaceful opportunities for breeding. The great pelican is to be constantly seen making his vicious dives after little fish, which do not appear to have much peace, as they are chased by their larger brethren in the water, and winged tyrants when they show near the surface. The pelican can swallow some twenty or thirty of its puny prey whole, as I found on examination.

Having coaled, &c., at Tobago, we weighed anchor and commenced our first cruise in the Pacific, intending, if time permitted, to visit the Sandwich Islands; or, if otherwise, to steer for San Francisco. As it is not my intention to enter into any description of a tedious and monotonous sea cruise, but merely to speak of such places as we visit, I will lay aside my pen for the present.

"Pass we the joys and sorrows sailors find,
Cooped in their winged sea-girt citadel;
The foul, the fair, the contrary, the kind,
As breezes rise and fall, and billows swell,
Till on some jocund morn, lo, land! and all is well."

CHAPTER II.

THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS—DEBATING SOCIETY ON BOARD.

We were about eight days from Panama, when we found ourselves not far from the Galapagos Islands, situated on the Line, a few hundred miles from the coast of South America. Great excitement prevailed on board when it became known that we should call at Charles Island, for any break in a voyage is pleasant and acceptable.

All our sportsmen were on the *qui vive;* guns and cartridges were brought to light, from cases where they had lain undisturbed since our departure from England; no one talked on any subject but the prospective immense slaughter of wild cattle, pigs, and wild-fowl; and, had all these anticipations been carried into effect, our visit to Charles Island would have become a famous incident in the annals of the sporting world.

On nearing the island, its volcanic origin became plainly visible, for most of the higher hills were evidently extinct craters, and, so far as we could see from the ship, the vegetation consisted solely of dried-up brushwood, except towards the hills, where

this occasionally assumed a greenish tint. Soon after our anchoring we were boarded by a boat containing half-a-dozen Spanish Indians—a colony numbering some five-and-twenty of whom we found to be on the island. From one of these, an intelligent fellow, we learned that numbers of cattle and wild-fowl were to be had, and that the reports we had read and heard of their existence were founded on fact. As the ship was only to remain till the evening of the following day, we immediately formed a shooting-party, leaving the ship in the natives' boat about noon.

But oh! ye Gods! how the prospect of coming sport warms the blood, raises the spirits, and makes the true sportsman eager for the slaughter. A member of our party—one of the excitable sons of old Erin—unable to restrain his passion for the sport until our arrival on *terra firma*, made the rocky shores ring again with his wild discharges at all chance sea birds that came within a hundred yards of the boat. Strange to say, however, these birds *will* carry a large dose of shot comfortably, and one after the other they sailed away in total indifference to the efforts of our sportsman, till at last one stately man-of-war bird, hovering for some seconds within fifteen yards, was made to feel the skill of our friend, when firing within a *reasonable* distance. We had to beat up some three or four miles along the shore, to get to the landing-place, which occupied a couple of

hours. Our landing was rather difficult, owing to a heavy surf running on a shelving rocky shore; but it was at length effected on the shoulders of our boatmen, and as some of us were fourteen-stoners, considerable amusement was caused by their narrow escapes from a ducking. At length we are all safe on shore, and away we start along a pathway leading straight inland, over nothing but dust and clinkers, with a perfectly dead and leafless bush around us. The farther we got from the beach, the more intense became the heat, perspiration was oozing from every pore; but onward we steadily plodded, till at last, gasping and panting, we came in sight of what we were informed was the settlement. It consisted of some eight or ten tents, formed of dried bullock-hides, spread over frameworks of sticks. Their dusky inhabitants were grouped around these with the exception of some who remained stretched out asleep under the tents, even our unaccustomed visit being insufficient to arouse these listless, lazy creatures to curiosity. We received considerable civility from the head-man, obtaining the requisite information as to the whereabouts of our game, and some half-a-dozen of his people to act as guides and assist to carry.

A two-mile walk, with a gradual ascent, brought us to a much pleasanter atmosphere and increasing signs of vegetation; trees appeared here and there, and the surrounding bush showed that it was pos-

sessed of some portion of vegetable life. Another mile and, on rounding the base of a large hill, we came on grassy glades, and in the distance patches of prairie, with cattle grazing on them, were dimly visible. Now we advanced more cautiously, taking advantage of every leafy covering which offered, and peering through boughs into the openings. At length a herd of some thirty or forty was discovered grazing quietly, in imagined safety, within a hundred yards of us. Too much eagerness to fire, and the spirit of rivalry which invariably shows itself amongst a large party, prevented a proper amount of execution being done. One calf, however, bit the dust, and a young bull was brought on his knees, though he soon regained his footing and followed in the wake of the rest of the herd, leaving a trail of blood behind. We now divided into two parties, one going in pursuit of the wounded animal, the other starting for a lake some distance off, where we were informed wild-fowl and more cattle would be met with. The party which followed the herd of cattle consisted of myself and two others. It was hard work pressing on at a rapid pace over broken ground, through thorny thickets and pathless jungle, but we were rewarded in the end by sighting the bull in a patch of thick scrub close to a small clear stream of water. He was lying down, and glared fiercely at us as we approached, but a bullet from one of our guns entering the fleshy part of his shoulders served to rouse

him, for, with a great effort, he staggered to his feet and charged right at us; we leapt nimbly out of his way, and, fortunately, saved ourselves. It was the result of his expiring strength, for, though the impetus of the charge carried him on a little farther, he came down head first, bending the neck half under the body by the force of his fall. After the excitement and hard work of the chase, we were very glad to slake our thirst at the little stream and rest ourselves; we then proceeded to our rendezvous, some large rocks near where we had separated from our fellow sportsmen. The scenery viewed from this spot was very fine; around all was green, except where some huge barren rock reared its head from amidst the foliage, the dark colouring of many of the tropical plants contrasting with the brighter grass. On one side was the hill which lay between us and the settlement, and which had presented a very uninteresting appearance from the sea, having only rocks and scrub right up to the edge of the crater. But the view it now showed was very different; this side of the crater had been entirely torn away by some mighty convulsion of nature, and the interior, being exposed, revealed one mass of beautiful vegetation sloping down from the opposite side. On the other hand, the country declined down to the sea in a succession of valleys, which were thickly wooded. The plateau on which we stood was surrounded by hills of various heights. many of them extinct vol-

canoes. Amongst the rocks we found the parent spring of the stream filling a natural basin in the centre of a thicket, which made a pleasant shady retreat from the heat of the sun while we awaited the return of the others. They had been very successful, and had bagged thirteen brace of ducks and a young pig. As the shades of night closed over the sylvan scene, we retraced our steps to the settlement after a very fair day's work, considering we were perfect strangers to the locality. It was now we found the natives useful in carrying the meat down to the settlement, and they engaged to bring our prizes on board early the next morning. After a wearisome march, we arrived at the village, and, wishing to remunerate our attendants, we gave the head-man a dollar and a half (value 6s.) to distribute amongst them, but they would only take half a dollar, a case of honest modesty beyond all understanding, a similar one, I may safely say, it had never been my lot to witness previously. The head-man in a civil manner offered any of us who liked to stay on shore accommodation for the night—of what kind I do not know—and promised plenty of shooting next morning, which was, he said, the best time for sport. However, such a villainous stench pervaded the whole camp, from decaying meat and cattle hides going through the process of drying, that none of the party felt inclined to accept the offer; or, as an American would say, could prevail on his

nose to give a ticket to remain. After a couple of miles' walk in the dark, during which some of us were constantly knocking our shins against the rough stones bestrewing the path, we arrived at the landing-place, and were again carried through the surf to the boat, getting on board about 10.30 p.m.

The next day another party went shooting, and had good sport. Two boat loads of officers and men also landed for the purpose of hauling the seine, or large net, supplied to the ship. The dress of officers when going for a day's seining is of a very nondescript character; the opportunity is seized upon for appearing in the oldest of coats and inexpressibles, well provided with ventilation-boots, which are sure of letting water out as well as in, and, in fact, the general appearance is presented of gentlemen who have had only naval half-pay for some time past upon which to support themselves. A good supply of stimulants is always provided to prevent catching cold and rheumatism. Though going nominally for the purpose of fishing, many took their guns, and the scene was more likely to frighten a nervous actor in it out of his wits, than to cause him to feel perfectly at ease, as a continual popping of guns was going on all around, and dead and wounded birds were continually falling amongst the fishermen, for many sea-birds—principally pelicans—were collected round by the sight of fish on the beach and in the shallow water. Sharks also showed the greatest au-

dacity, following the captured fish in the net, close up to the shore; several small ones were caught in it. One of the officers was most pertinaciously attacked by a small shark, who followed him into shallow water, and only that he fought hard with a boat-hook which he had with him, and repelled the attacks, he would most likely have supplied the shark with a delicious meal.

The boats returned to the ship in the vening with enough fish for several days' consumption, if the heat of the weather had permitted of their being kept.

On the 5th February, we spread our wings for a very long flight—possibly, as I said before, to visit the Sandwich Islands, and, if not, for San Francisco —our orders being to arrive at Vancouver's Island by the end of April. However, man only proposes, and unfavourable zephyrs delayed us so long near the Equator, that we shaped our course direct for the Golden City, and had to look forward to visiting the islands another time. Time hangs heavily at sea, and, though perhaps it passes a little faster when once the monotonous round of every-day routine is got into, still there is little active employment, and few events to mark one day from another. Seeing these things, the captain interested himself very much to give us some amusement at least once a week, and a debating society was started, which met on Wednesday nights, and to which the crew

were admitted as listeners. Religion and present politics were prohibited. A week's notice was given of the subject, of the introducer of it, and the proposer and seconder of his vote of thanks. After these prescribed speeches had been delivered, any one was allowed to express his opinion. Some of the best subjects we had were "Warren Hastings," "Charles I." "Superstition and Mesmerism," &c., and though, occasionally, when business was dull, we had to listen to dry discourses on "Salt Water," and some uninteresting statistics of the American navy, yet, as a rule, these evenings were anxiously looked forward to and much enjoyed.

CHAPTER III.

ARRIVAL AT SAN FRANCISCO—A TRIP UP THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER.

After passing some sixty days at sea, the frigate to which I belonged might have been seen, on a bright, pleasant day, steaming and sailing up the narrow passage which leads to the harbour of San Francisco.

It is supposed by many that the large harbour of San Francisco and its many bays, together with San Pablo Bay, originally formed an inland sea, which eventually burst its barriers at the "Golden Gates" (as the entrance is called), and became united with the ocean. The appearance of the gates justifies this theory, for the headlands and bluffs on each side are bold and massive, and, so far as can be seen from the water, ranges of hills extend on each hand, which appear calculated to keep the waters back to all eternity. So it is probable that the place where the Golden Gates now open was the one weak link in the chain. Approaching the city from the sea, a very fine view presents itself, and one on which Californians properly pride themselves.

The hills on either side are of a soft, undulating appearance, and are clad in a bright verdure from base to summit. How pleasant and refreshing they looked, after a couple of months on board ship! Here and there small villages, or the solitary homestead of the farmer, surrounded by the results of his labour, nestling in some pretty valley. As we round the last bluff which shuts in the city, the large bay, bordered by picturesque hills, spreads itself out before us. Many steamers and sailing craft ply their busy mission across its peaceful waters, pointing out by their course the direction where many rising towns lie hid amidst the distant valleys. Lying to the right of the bay is the golden city itself, that proud boast of California, rising over several hills, and presenting an uninterrupted view of its lines of long, straight streets, and square blocks of houses. There was a great deal of shipping lying in the harbour and alongside the wharves, but they were mostly small craft, engaged in the coast and harbour trade.

The inhabitants of San Francisco we found most kind and hospitable. On a first visit to a port, it takes some time to form an acquaintance with people, but we soon found that here the inhabitants were most willing to meet our advances half way; invitations were issued for an afternoon dance on board, and before long our slight friendship ripened into intimacy. Gaieties and amusements were the

order of the day. A box at the opera was kindly placed at our disposal, and many of the officers took advantage of it.

Game abounds in great quantities and varieties in California—deer, bears, and almost every description of feathered game and wild-fowl. Unfortunately, we arrived just at the termination of the shooting season, and the only birds at all available were snipe, which, as migrators, do not come under the game laws. My friend H—— and myself, when on shore, soon after our arrival, heard of a very good place some eighty miles up the San Joaquin river, where, as a rule, the snipe remained later than elsewhere. The place named was a ranch or farm, situated in the Tule lands. These are large tracts of low lying country bordering for many miles on the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. Little of these tracts is at present reclaimed, but they contain many a rich harvest for the agriculturist of the future. We made up our minds to accept the invitation of Captain F——, of the "Amador," one of the San Francisco and Stockton river boats, to accompany him on his upward trip; so, having obtained a few days' leave, we packed up some traps, and started from the wharf in the afternoon. The "Amador" steamed through the long harbours towards the Straits of San Pablo. Hills rose on either side, their grassy slopes, dotted here and there with herds of grazing cattle and sheep, looking

beautiful in the soft light of the evening. Occasionally we saw a farm-house peep out from amongst a clump of trees, with its canopy of light smoke floating in the evening air. Soon we passed the Straits, and San Pablo Bay lay before us, surrounded by similar green hills and grassy plains; while a gorgeous sunset bathed the scene in a rich flood of light, reflected in the rippling waves, and overhanging circles of clouds.

> "Day closes, and the sun, though weary,
> Still lingers in his own loved west,
> And sheds around a golden glory,
> Ere yet he sinks to his evening rest."

The scenery along the river was all fine, though somewhat monotonous. The first town we touched at was Benicia, from which Heenan, the prize-fighter, took his *nom de guerre* of the "Benicia Boy." We had no opportunity of visiting this classic spot, for we just ran alongside the pier, and, with a bustle and scramble, were off again. Two small towns, called New York and Antioch, were our next stoppages, around which a considerable quantity of land was under cultivation. Antioch is a rising town of some little importance. The coal is shipped here from the Black Diamond mines of Mont Diablo, whose summit is visible, towering like a giant above the surrounding hills, from a considerable distance. Undulating ranges occupy the space between Antioch and the mines, and over these the coal descends on

trucks, coming the entire distance of thirty-five miles without the use of steam power.

We originally intended to visit a ranch belonging to a family named Webb, but, as police-constables say, "acting on the information we received" as to the scarcity of snipe there, we determined to go some ten miles further up, and stop with a man named Harrington, who was in charge of a large ranch there. About eleven o'clock we approached Harrington's cottage, and a few shrill calls from the steamer's whistle brought him down to the end of a rough little pier he had run out for the convenience of communicating with the steamers. We tumbled out with our traps, and in a moment more the "Amador" was lost sight of in the darkness, leaving us standing face to face with the man we had aroused out of bed at that untimely hour, not quite knowing how to apologise for ourselves, and explain matters. However, a word or two put things all right, and he conducted us into his house, which was a small wooden affair, containing three rooms; two on the ground floor, and the one up above where my friend and self stretched ourselves out for the first peaceful sleep in a steady bed which we had enjoyed for months. Next morning we sat down to breakfast at a little after six o'clock, for early hours were always kept in this establishment. Mrs. H—— was, of course, our cook, and a very good idea she had of how to prepare a

breakfast. We were suddenly transported from the unpleasantness of salt meat and hard biscuit, to which a mess is reduced at the end of a long sea voyage, to a choice repast in a land literally overflowing with milk and honey. Bittern was our principal dish; it was the first time I had tasted it, and liked it very much. Quantities of nice, brown, home-made, wheaten cakes, cream, butter and eggs, made up our meal. During our stay, Mrs. H—— kept up the first impression she made, by her continued good cooking. She gave us a variety of American dishes, including the miners' favourite, bacon and beans.

We spent our days in hard walking over soft boggy land, and bagged a good number of snipe, ducks, and bitterns, starting immediately after our early breakfasts, taking lunch with us, and coming home in the twilight to a cheerful inviting meal ready spread, or waiting on the stove and Mrs. H—— smiling a welcome. The good people were very much pleased to have us with them, as for weeks they sometimes went without receiving a single visitor.

During our short stay I learnt more incidents of rough American life than I before had had a chance of doing. Harrington was a thorough specimen of the enterprising shrewd American. He was born in Kentucky, and had been accustomed to the woods, and the use of the rifle, from a child; he afterwards went

to Missouri, where he saw most of the turmoils and lawlessness of that state, where street fights, election rows, bowie-knives, and revolvers were the order of the day. He afterwards crossed the plains of Central America with a party for the gold mines; but, as each evening was spent in listening to his stories and anecdotes, I will give his account, in his own words, as near as it was possible for me to write it down during my stay. The narrative has no pretension to any extraordinary amount of interest, but still, it is one applicable to large numbers of cases, and descriptive of the dangers and trials the all-powerful allurements of the gold mines are capable of causing their votaries to pass through.

CHAPTER IV.

"I know not if the tale be true,
'Twas told me as I tell to you."

LEAVING SAN FRANCISCO. VANCOUVER'S ISLAND.

When the news of the discovery of gold in California first reached the Eastern States, it was not believed by many to be true, but was looked on more as one of those reports which were at that time frequently circulated, to induce immigration into a particular district or town. However, there was a great deal of speculation on the subject, and many resolved to try their luck. Some parties started away at once to cross the plains, over a road which was then but little used, and one beset with many dangers, from Indians, starvation, and a want of guides. When the first gold arrived in Kansas from the new diggings, it was like a spark being applied to a barrel of gunpowder. Almost every one was for the diggings. Men threw up good farms, paying professions, and stores; loafers looked out for gangs, to take them as "pals;" and there was a general move to the West from all parts. It was not long before I caught the fever, and gave up my business, which was princi-

pally horse-jobbing, and went into partnership with some others for mutual protection and help during our trip over. We got a waggon and team, and the necessary tools for mining, and started to cross the plains—a party of nine. There were many others travelling the same road as ourselves, bound for the golden land, where, according to popular rumour, gold was to be picked up for the trouble of stooping; all calculating on making a considerable pile in considerably less than no time. We thought we had little to fear from the prairie Indians while there was such a rush, and we were right; for though they at times attacked small parties, when overcome with fatigue or hunger, for the sake of robbing a waggon or getting arms, they seldom cared to risk their lives where the odds were not so much in their favour.

We gained the foot of the Rocky Mountains in safety, and here different tracks led away to the various mines and finds of gold, through a country which a year or two previously had only been explored by a few wandering Indians or trappers. The road we were unlucky enough to choose led us away by a mere trail to some new diggings, reported to be most productive, through some of the roughest travelling known amongst the Rockies, and to the vicinity of some of the worst tribes of Indians. However, we went on the principle, "nothing venture, nothing have," and trusted for safety to the

members of our party. For some days all went well; once or twice we saw an encampment, but did not come face to face with them. We kept a sharp look out, and had always a watch set at night; but at last good luck forsook us, our misfortunes commencing this way. We had been traversing a valley during the best part of the day, a good hunting country, and our having fired several shots at deer may have attracted some stray Indian scouts, for the ring of a rifle sounds for a long distance amongst the mountains; but, any way, we were encamped under shelter of a large rock, with our fire screened in as much as possible. A man named Sanders was keeping the second watch, and if he dozed a little it was not to be wondered at, for we had had a weary day's journey, often having to work hard to get the waggon out of soft places, and over rough ground. He was sitting in the shade, with his back against the rock, dozing lightly, when he was of a sudden brought to his senses by a little pebble striking him on the face. Turning his eyes up, he saw the face of a tarnation red-skin peering over the edge of the rock, taking stock of the camp and ourselves. Sanders moved his hand towards his rifle, but, before he could use it, the red-skin had made tracks. As we placed some value on our scalps, we felt it was lucky for us he had no party with him. We were pretty sure we would hear more about that visit, and so we did, for towards evening on the next day we

were attacked from behind the rocks and trees, and driven back into a narrow cañon, where we, fortunately, had only a small opening to defend. They attacked us several times, using every artful dodge they could devise. During three days we killed or wounded some fifteen of them; but their losses appeared to make them all the more determined, and, changing their tactics, they sat down to starve us out. The cañon was barren of shrub or tree, and there was not a living thing to eat in it. The back of it looked impassable, and the sides were precipitous; so, if ever there was a catch in a trap, or "possum up a tree," it was there. At last, when our small stock of food was gone, we determined to try and escape by the mountain at the rear. This, with hard toil, we accomplished at night, having to relinquish our waggon and all our traps to the Indians, first, however, killing the horses. After many perils and hardships, only five of us out of the nine reached our destination."

Harrington's story was at the end a little more detailed, but the above was its substance. The Tule lands present great inducements for settling. They have a rich, productive soil, many feet deep, and will yield for many years without manuring. Drainage would be the only expense to get the land into good order, and, though labour is expensive, the returns are sure and quick, with such a large and high-priced market as that of San Francisco

near. Rivers and slews wind through the country in every direction, the waters of which are tidal, though, above a certain distance, fresh. The method of drainage is therefore simple. At the end of the drains are self-acting gates, which, as the water goes down, open and empty the drain, and as it rises they close again.

Our leave having expired, we carried our traps down to the end of the little pier, ready for the steamer. We had previously seen her smoke, when more than twenty miles distant by water, travelling to the right and left, across the flat country, as she followed the curves of the river, which winds backwards and forwards often at less than a right angle. At a signal from us she came alongside, and, after saying good-bye to our host and his wife, we were in another half-minute speeding back to San Francisco.

Amongst seamen in the British Navy, there is a great belief in the gold-to-be-picked-up character of California, and many are, consequently, lost from ships calling at San Francisco. The morning after our arrival, when we had only two boats in the water, one a steam launch, the other a pinnace, despite of sentries, officers, and discipline, seventeen men manned the pinnace smartly, and pulled on shore, before any other boats could be sent in pursuit, the launch not having steam up at the time. On touching American soil all become free men, so

the terrors held forth against deserters are here laughed at with impunity. The men, however, soon find out their mistake, and bitterly do they regret their rashness. Nine out of ten who "run" are made insensible at the houses of the crimps, who infest the various landing-places, and are then put on board merchant ships, many of which are constantly detained here, unable to go to sea through want of hands. The crimps receive from two to four months' pay in advance from the captains for their services; the ships immediately sail, and, when the sailors recover from the effects of the drugs they have taken, they find their short-lived dream of making fortunes in California dispelled, and a mate's rough voice singing out for them to move up, to reef topsails, or make sail. They must, however, grin and bear it, for, if useless, or sulky, the captain can always hand them over to the English authorities, on arrival in port, as deserters. Those deserters not taken in hand by the crimps, who are always on the look-out, must be thoroughly useless, and for whom a merchant captain would give no price.

These, as a rule, left to their own devices, sink into a state of utter destitution, and often give themselves up to men-of-war, preferring to suffer the heavy punishment awaiting them, than to linger on in starvation.

Towards the end of April, we steamed once more through the Golden Gates on our way to Vancouver's

Island, and many were the regrets, and many were the pulls at the heart-strings of some of our susceptible young officers, on leaving the hospitable Californians.

A good many glasses were turned on the Cliff House Hotel, which stands on the southern promontory, as promises had been given by friends of going there to see the ship pass out; but distance did not lend enchantment on this occasion, as we were unable to distinguish who was who.

The day previous to our arrival, one of those sad accidents occurred which are only too frequent on board ship. A boy, who was taking his clothes down from drying in the fore-rigging, fell overboard, striking the ship's side in his fall. One of the sub-lieutenants, T——, very courageously jumped overboard after him, though there was a very heavy sea running at the time, and the ship was rolling considerably. The boy, however, did not float long enough for T—— to get hold of him. T—— was some fifteen minutes in the water, and was nearly numbed and quite exhausted when the life-boat picked him up.*

On the morning of the ninth day out, we sighted Cape Flattery, the south point of the entrance to the Straits of Juan de Fuca. The cape terminates

* This officer has since been awarded a medal by The Humane Society.

in a small island and reef of rocks. A range of hills run inland, which, though small at first, gradually increase in size till they at length transform themselves into the Olympian mountains, whose snowy peaks are plainly to be seen from Esquimalt, and make one long for a transit to that perpetually cool region, when the summer's sun strikes warmly down on Vancouver.

The harbour of Esquimalt, where the dockyard is built, is most picturesque and beautiful, and, at first sight, looks hardly large enough to contain more than two or three ships, being entirely enclosed with small hills, all covered with the graceful pine; but, on longer acquaintance, it enlarges into a good-sized harbour, with accommodation for a fleet.

CHAPTER V.

"If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows, that thou wouldst forget;
If thou wouldst read a lesson that will keep
Thy heart from fainting, and thy soul from sleep—
Go to the woods and hills! No tears
Dim the sweet look that nature wears."

VANCOUVER'S is an island which must surely possess some source of interest or attraction for every one, for the man must be a cynic indeed who can see no beauties or find no enjoyments in nature's own wild and lovely abode; and here she has assuredly produced some of her master-pieces of scenery. Mountains and hills of every shape and form, yet all clothed in a variegated mantle of graceful verdure; broad estuaries washing their silent shores, placid lakes sleeping in their valleys, sparkling mountain torrents, or rippling streams winding across the plain—all these, picturesquely grouped, are the component parts of a succession of the most charming landscapes. For the sportsman, the dark, sombre pine woods, intermingled with maple and birch, and spreading over the greater part of the country, shelter a large variety of game. For the angler, stream, lake, and estuary alike teem with his shining

prey; while, for the searcher after knowledge in the vegetable and mineral worlds (about which I, unfortunately, know nothing), it contains many wide and untrodden fields.

The fishing season was just commencing at the time of our arrival, but it was too early for trout to take well, the nights being still frosty. Many lakes are a convenient distance from Esquimalt for a day's fishing, and there are several larger and better ones situated further off, to fish which it was necessary to make an excursion for three days. To one of these, called Prospect Lake, myself and two companions determined to go, and trust to our rods and guns to keep the pot boiling, or rather to furnish the meal when the pot *was* boiling. We drove nearly all the distance, taking our camp-gear with us, which, however, we had to carry ourselves during the last couple of miles, making two trips. We determined to form our camp on a small island situated at a convenient distance from the shore, so as to be safe from Indians, and leave them no opportunity to steal from the camp, if we should be away fishing or shooting. The first day we were principally employed in building a shelter, and getting our traps, &c., across in a little boat to the island. We had also to cut down some small trees, and take them, together with a quantity of pine branches, to our island, as it boasted but one solitary tree. The camp was simply composed of two stout poles at

each end, which crossed at the top, and a transverse beam, resting in the two forks; against this side poles were placed, and one side and both ends wattled in with young fir branches, thus leaving one side only exposed, where the fire was lighted.

The lake, surrounded by its pine-clad hills, was very beautiful, especially if one looked at it so as to take in the little island, and its camp, with the one solitary pine behind it; the blue smoke curling up from the fire against the dark green bank beyond. (See frontispiece.)

B—— and F——, my two companions, were the very men suited for this pleasant make-shift life—always good-humoured, lively, and ready for any amount of necessary work. We discovered an old French trapper, who lived in a little log shanty at the head of the lake, who gained a livelihood by shooting and trapping beavers at several beaver-dams on the lake and in its vicinity. He gave us some venison the first day before we were able to procure any for ourselves, but was rather uncommunicative, though, perhaps, his slight knowledge of English may have accounted for that.

The day after our arrival we were up at daybreak, had a swim in the lake, then lit the fire, put the pot on for cocoa, and prepared our repast of broiled venison and fish. F—— started after breakfast with the old trapper for a day with the deer and grouse, and B—— and myself stuck to the lake and gentler

craft. The weather was charming, and in a couple of hours we got some three dozen trout, averaging from 1¼lbs. to 1¾lbs., one or two rather above that, all of which were strong fish, and gave us plenty of sport. We passed the rest of the day pleasantly away in finishing some work about the camp, and cutting firewood until sun-down, when we heard F——'s cheery shout from the opposite shore of the lake; in answer to which one of us took the boat across and brought him back with the result of his day's work, which consisted of the best parts of a young buck he had shot, and a brace of grouse. These haply insured us plenty of food for some days to come. We prepared our repast, and were not long in falling-to with all the zest and enjoyment which healthy exercise, bracing air, and freedom from all worldly cares can give. After dinner we threw more logs on the fire, and were soon setting round a roaring blaze smoking and spinning yarns —an accomplishment in which both my companions excelled, and we did not forget to pass the flowing bowl—for, with a due regard for the preservation of our healths, we had brought the ingredients with us. Soon, however, the effects of unwonted exertion began to make themselves felt, and, after replenishing the fire with good heavy logs, likely to burn for some time, we rolled ourselves in our blankets, and sunk into sound repose on our couches of spruce tops.

The next day the order of our amusements was reversed, F—— remaining on the lake, and B—— and myself going with the trapper to try our luck after more difficult prey. We struck away, through the pine forest, from the shores of the lake—up hill and down dale—walking at a rapid pace, though with little fatigue in our moccassins. The old Frenchman had four well-trained dogs with him, and, on our arrival at the outskirts of a likely-looking cover, generally a large thicket at the bottom of a valley, we would station ourselves round it at different points, and put the dogs in. The clumps of willows were often too large to surround properly, and once or twice deer got out, as we could tell by the dogs breaking into full cry, but without our even seeing them. However, we managed to bowl over a tolerably fat doe, and with some grouse we were quite satisfied as we returned to our island-home, in the evening. The remainder of our stay we spent similarly employed, and with varying luck. There is no life so pleasant to some men as that I have been describing, to occasionally get away into the primitive forest, away from the petty annoyances of this life, away from all society and its obligations, away from disagreeable, though necessary, neighbours. I do not mean to say that a continuance of such a life would be agreeable to any civilized person, but, undoubtedly, it is delightful as a change. I know we thoroughly regretted having to leave our pretty

little camp when we had packed up to start back for Esquimalt.

> "And stern Duty rose, and frowning,
> Flung her leaden chain around us."

Being anxious to visit as much of the neighbouring country as our limited periods of leave would permit, I, after the lapse of some time, started for a district called Cowichin, some forty miles to the northward of Victoria, with four companions. A steamer runs there weekly with mails, freight, and passengers, but Tuesday being her day of departure from Victoria, we could not afford to wait, our leave expiring on the following Sunday. We, therefore, chose another, though somewhat slower, route, which took us through twenty miles of the South Saanich district, and then went on by water another five-and-twenty miles. Having engaged a good two-horse trap, we packed up and started from Esquimalt at half-past ten. The road for the first seven or eight miles passes many houses and clearings, but after that it became rough and narrow—little more, in fact, than a waggon-trail. At intervals the wheels would plunge into deep ruts, and we frequently had to stoop to allow the branches of trees to sweep over us. Nearly the whole distance was through dense forests, but we occasionally caught glimpses of a settler's clearing, with its deeply-cut cart-track leading off to it from the main road. The forest was composed chiefly of

cedar, maple, and pine, some of the latter grown to an enormous height, being, I think, the "Douglas P' ıe." The woods were alive with birds and gaily-coloured insects. The pretty blue jay was constantly about us, and the large red-winged woodpecker was often disturbed by us from his boring occupation, while, with a loud and startling whirr, the humming-bird, the most beautiful and brilliant of all the feathered tribes, would whisk past us, allowing us just a glance of him as he flitted from branch to branch of his favourite wild currant tree. We constantly passed large beds of the wild rose and hyacinth, filling the air with their sweet perfume. In fact, all nature was in a smiling and pleasant humour as we jogged merrily along on that June morning.

Saanich is divided into two districts—north and south—the former being the most cultivated division, and called the garden of the island. There the hops are grown which are used for the Colonial breweries, of which there are several doing a thriving business. We at length arrived at a "store," as such country inns are called. We found it one of the usual type —a long, low bar, with the inevitable long lines of brandy and gin bottles ranged at the back. There was an Indian village near, where we hoped to hire a canoe. We found a couple of farmers, their saddled horses being outside, refreshing the inner man. Having entered into conversation, we exchanged

drinks, that being the proper thing to do. One of them looked a somewhat striking man, not tall, but strongly built, and very broad in the shoulders, with a tanned, resolute face, the lower part being almost hidden by a thick beard. He had a quick, dare-devil eye, and altogether looked a "knowing shot." During an hour's waiting for a canoe, we had a long chat together; and he, evidently glad to meet some one out of his ordinary circle, became very communicative, and told us some incidents of his own life. I will relate his narrative almost in his own words:—

"I am now forty-five years of age," he began, "and have altogether led a pretty rough up-and-down sort of life of it. I come from not many miles from Portsmouth, which place I have no doubt most of you, gentlemen, know well. I was always a wild boy, and, when ten years old, ran away from home, and took shelter with an old man whom I knew before, who had been for many years in the habit of carrying on a rather loose commercial business about the Isle of Wight and the neighbouring coast—one, in fact, which I am afraid required more the cloak of night to prosper than the light of day. Some thirty-five years back a brisk trade was still being done in the smuggling line, and many boats ran cargoes.

"When I joined my old friend, I was, naturally, not much up to the management of a boat or the

intricacies of his profession; but, being an apt scholar, and taking kindly to that line of trade, after a few trips across the Channel and in and out around the islands, he considered me entitled to the honour of being his only companion in running a heavy cargo he was particularly anxious about. We made the French coast safely, and, having shipped our kegs and etceteras, stood over again, our intention being to make the coast about nightfall. At first we had a spanking breeze, which ran us into a heavy fog, where we lost it, when about two-thirds across. We, however, kept slowly closing the land, my aged preceptor having so much experience in the navigation of those parts, that he could almost fetch to a hair's-breadth. Well, I was at the helm, steering the course which was to take us up to the Needles, when the fog began to lift, with a shift of wind, and I distinctly made out the south end of the island some miles off, and saw we could just get in. This somewhat cheered me up, for I was anxious to get the boat well in without rousing the old man, who, tired out with anxious watching on the previous night, was asleep below. The Fates, however, were against me; for, as the fog drifted more and more to seaward, I saw a cutter, undoubtedly a revenue cruiser, haul her wind, and stand on a course parallel to ourselves, though a long way to leeward; and, so far as I could judge, she would not nearly fetch the Needles without standing off shore and tacking; so

there was still a good chance for us. But soon my hopes were doomed to disappointment, for, with a puff and a whiz, a shot from her nine-pounder came splashing across our bows. The sound had not reached us a second ere the old man sprung on deck, alive at once to the difficulties of the case. A glance around showed him the position, and, roughly pushing me from the tiller, he bade me go below and not show myself till I was told to: but I would as lieve have gone to the bottom of the sea as out of sight of the fun; so I laid myself down on the deck, with just my head looking over the little gunwale which surrounded our craft. Scarce another minute ere a second messenger came ploughing up the water ahead. 'The next will be at us,' said the old smuggler, 'but I don't care a curse so long as he shoots clear of spars and rigging.' I well remember the half-complacent, half-calculating smile with which the old fellow glanced at the cruiser and then at the Needles, which were slightly on our lee bow. A third puff soon came from the bows of the cutter, and, before I had time to duck my head well down, with the fond belief that the gunwale would keep out shot, the iron smashed through our deck forward, sending a shower of splinters into the air, and plunged into the sea to windward of us. 'My lad,' exclaimed the old man, 'go below, or worse may happen.' I, however, vowed stoutly I would see it out; so he desisted from pressing me further.

"The breeze had now freshened considerably, and we were bowling along briskly, holding our own with the cutter, which was closing the shore fast, and would soon be obliged to go on the other tack; and, directly we rounded the point, we were bound to lose sight of her, and would be in safety; for anywhere along the shore we could drop our kegs overboard, and pick them up at a more favourable time; evening was also fast closing in, so we had every chance in our favour. The cutter was firing at intervals, some shot grazing us, some going wide. Fortunately, no more damage had been done us. At length, however, a shot striking the quarter sent a large splinter from a hollard, which struck the old man, and felled him like an ox. I rushed from my place to the tiller, in an agony of fear lest he should have been killed; but, staggering to his feet, he wildly waved me away, and steered the boat into her course again, she having luffed up in the wind. My old friend, speaking thickly and fast, now gave me to understand that, if anything more was to happen to him, I was to drop the kegs in a small bay, for which we were bound, and where very likely a boat would come off to my assistance, and then keep on for Portsmouth harbour, as if nothing had happened. The land had now shut out our enemy, and night given us the protection of its veil, when, from loss of blood and of the excitement which had supported him, my companion sunk into a

swoon. I took the helm, and, with the help of darkness, carried out his instructions to the letter. Entering Portsmouth about midnight, I did not answer the hail of the watch, fearful lest they should detain me on seeing the evidences of our having been fired at, but crept up amongst a lot of other craft, and thus eluded the guard-boat which followed. The old smuggler weathered his broken head all right, but never tried on any adventures of that kind again. As he had already saved a good round sum, he thought it was best not to tempt the fickle dame any more. I remained at the work some years longer, but, having got mixed up in one or two rather shady affairs, I emigrated to the States, with the assistance of my father. Well, I landed at New York, went westward, took to farming, but found that the steady, plodding work necessary to make it pay well was not suited to my taste. Hearing of the gold mines, I started away across the plains, got a good claim, and went to work hard. Ah, those were wild days—plenty of money, and no need, apparently, to look out for the future. We miners, after a 'haul,' would go on the 'burst' to some large town, San Francisco being the favourite, and squander in a week the gold which had taken months to accumulate. I have known a miner, standing at a 'bar,' take out a handful of twenty-dollar pieces, and fling them at the large mirror behind the counter, telling the

bar-keeper to pick them up as payment for it. Incidents of that kind were common enough then.

"I might at times have returned to England with a comfortable fortune. I have always been a lucky man in the actual mining part of the business, and, after a while, began to sober down, and have sometimes had sixteen and seventeen thousand dollars; but speculation was my ruin, and, what between Mining Companies, Banks, and other bubbles, my money vanished as fast as ever. At length I tired of my continued rise and fall, and, gold being found at Carriboo, I made tracks for that land of promise, determining to drop speculation. I was lucky enough, but, as I am growing old, I thought it wise to invest in a farm; so I bought one some miles from this, and have worked on it for several years, till now it is in good order, and will keep me in my old age. I expect I shall some day get the old fit on again, and go roving and mining, though I hear there is little money being made now, except by companies; but, anyway, I shall always have the consolation of knowing there is a harbour of refuge under my lee. It is high time for drinks all round; so say, gentlemen, what will you take?"

With these words, our communicative friend finished his story, tossed off his drink, said adieu, and, mounting his strong little horse, started at full gallop on his road.

CHAPTER VI.

"The hunter turned away from the scene
Where the home of his fathers once had been,
And heard by the distant and measured stroke
That the woodman hewed down the giant oak;
And burning thoughts came o'er his mind
Of the white man's faith and love unkind."

An arm of the sea disconnects the district of Saanich from the main part of the island, forming it into a peninsula. This inlet runs nearly north and south, and has two entrances, one to the northward, the other to the east. Down and across this inlet we had to continue our journey in a canoe, having completed a bargain with an Indian, through the assistance of an interpreter and the Indian's wife. *En passant*, I would remark that, when engaged in pecuniary or bartering transactions with Indians, it is always advantageous to have their squaws present.

The inlet gradually widened as we proceeded. The scene before us was calm and beautiful, miles of unbroken forest covering the surrounding hills down to where their bases were washed by the waters, over which we gently glided, impelled by sail and paddle. Occasionally a curl of blue smoke

ascended from amongst the trees bordering the beach, where some small Indian village had been built, or fisherman had taken up his abode; these were the only signs of human life. There, hauled up on the beach close to the wigwams, or anchored near to the broken waters of a reef, is the never-failing accompaniment of the coast-Indian—his canoe. In it he spends most of his life, and by it entirely supports himself and family; constantly performing voyages in such tempestuous weather that it appears incredible that such a fragile bark can survive it, and spearing and skilfully catching monstrous fish, a contact with which would inevitably upset his frail tenement. Evening's soft gloom was descending over mountain and bay, forest and stream, as our canoe grated on the shingly beach of Cowichin.

A district and also a river bear the name of Cowichin, and near the mouth of the latter a powerful and warlike tribe, not many years ago, built their lodges. These have now, in what appears to be the natural order of things, given way, to be replaced by the lodge of the white man; a small village and occasionally a few hovels being the only remaining habitations of what was once a numerous tribe. It is a fertile and productive district, and well settled.

That night the "John Bull" inn was our abode, but anybody accustomed to the comforts generally

comprised under the term inn, when confined to the old country, would be very much surprised at the accommodation afforded us. We had salmon for supper, for good salmon can always be obtained along the coast, when in season, from the Indians. After washing this down with potations of colonial beer, which we fortunately obtained at the "bar," we had our pipes and a glass of grog; then, on asking the landlord for our beds, he told us we should find it all right upstairs; so, ascending a steep narrow staircase, we came to a kind of loft, through which a cooling current of air was whistling from the chinks of the logs which composed our dormitory. We looked round for our beds; but, alas! no comfort-bringing pillows and sheets met our gaze. A few rough boards were elevated above the floor, and on these we were contented to stretch ourselves, two on each, rolled up in our blankets, with our knapsacks for pillows. We were up betimes and out for a swim, the house being built on a beach; had breakfast, and started in a canoe up the river, on our way to Somenos Lake, where we purposed spending our leave, having heard there was good shooting in the vicinity, and fishing in the lake.

Good nature and a willingness to assist strangers is always a prominent feature in newly-settled countries; and, as we were loading ourselves with our heavy camp-gear, etc., preparatory to a long

tramp, we experienced the good results of this trait; for a settler, who was riding past, dismounted, and, loading his horse with our traps, insisted on walking with us all the distance, taking him a long way out of his own road. We found an old log hut on the shores of the lake, and in it we established our head-quarters.

Nearly all the country between Cowichin and Somenos Lake is settled, or has been so; a few of the farms not turning out well, their owners have tried elsewhere. On the opposite side of the lake to where we were located is the farm of Mr. Green; he was at one time in the employment of the Colonial Government as a civil engineer, and saw a great deal of both British Columbia and Vancouver's Island, but at length quitted the theodolite for the plough. He was very attentive and civil to us, sending a can of milk every morning across in a canoe. During our stay he raised a "bee," for the purpose of building a cow-house, with a hay-loft over it. "Raising a bee" means collecting all the neighbours from miles around, who assemble on a certain day to build a house, barn, or whatever object the "bee" is raised for. I went with one of my companions to assist at Mr. Green's, as I had often heard of these gatherings, and was anxious to see one for myself. The men had been at work some little time when we arrived, and had already raised some six or seven feet of the barn. It was

perfectly astonishing to see how quickly the good-natured builders run up a substantial building of rough logs, calculated to last at least half a century. These logs are prepared previously to the assembling of the "bee;" having all the bark stripped off, and being cut to the required length, they are placed according to their size, so as to cause no delay. The barn at Green's was built in the form of a square, no windows or doorway being cared for till after the walls were finished, when they were cut out. The ends of the logs are dovetailed into one another. This is done by the corner-men, who have the hardest work, and require to be well skilled in the use of the axe. Four logs are rolled up at a time, one placed along each of the sides; the axes then go to work in each corner, dovetailing and trimming off the ends. The corner-men remain at work the whole time, rising higher and higher as each succeeding log is placed. All the work is done by eye—no plumb-line or square is necessary—yet the structure grows as perpendicular and square as any brick building where every precaution is taken. In the middle of the day we all partook of a good substantial lunch of ham, potatoes, home-made bread and cakes, and in the evening separated to our different habitations.

Each day of our stay we went out after game, two going in one direction, and two in another. One, who was *chef de cuisine* for the day, was left

behind at the old hut, his business being to wash-up, cut firewood, and prepare dinner for the others when they returned in the evening. I will not enter into a tedious description of each day, suffice it to say, that the fortunes of the chase were variable, and not altogether as successful as we should have wished.

Our days of rough and pleasant life on the shores of Lake Somenos soon came to a termination, and we reluctantly packed up and prepared to start back. An Indian and his canoe were hired to take our traps back to Cowichin, and save us their carriage over a long and tedious road. I accompanied him, while the others walked to the mouth of the Cowichin River. The first few miles we had very hard work, as we had to force the canoe down a narrow stream, which connects Lake Somenos with the Cowichin River, and which was completely overhung with willows and thick creepers. Through these we had to make our way, and the obstruction was often so great that it required all our strength, shoving and pulling the canoe by the overhanging branches, to get along. However, when once in the main river, I was quite recompensed for past troubles. The river—although wide and shallow—is rapid, and swept us down at such a rate that the Indian had all his work cut out to steer us, for there was no necessity to use the paddles. Past solitary wigwams and Indian villages, past wild forest and

settler's clearing, past hill and swamp, we rushed rapidly on. Occasionally we came to Indian fishing-weirs, running across the river at its most rapid portions, and it required all the dexterity of my skilful conductor to shoot us through the little openings left on each side. We also passed several canoes returning from fishing, laboriously poling themselves up against the rapid current, and taking hours to do the distance we had done in thirty minutes. We soon arrived at our destination, which was the farm of two brothers, who had kindly offered us the hospitalities of their house. My companions arrived shortly after, and we spent a most pleasant and agreeable evening with these two gentlemen, who were naturally glad of a little society different to what is generally met with in the backwoods.

The next morning we again took boat and crossed the bay to our old quarters, the "John Bull" inn. We here awaited the arrival of the steamer which was to convey us on to Victoria, but she, like many other things in this colony, was three hours behind her time. During the time we were awaiting the arrival of the steamer, Harris, the landlord of the inn, told us some incidents of his life, which I will give the reader the benefit of, as they struck me as being rather interesting.

When young, he served as a lifeguardsman, during parts of the reign of George IV. and William

IV.; he, however, bought his discharge, and, strange as the metamorphosis may appear, was, not many years after, the captain of a vessel, which, from his account of it, appears to have been a sort of half-privateer, half-buccaneer; he plied his calling in the Gulf of Mexico. He told us of fabulous sums he made, but, for some reason which I forget, he forsook the sea and again took to the military profession, becoming, through some of those strange vicissitudes of life which men of his stamp often pass through, a captain of militia and justice of the peace in Mosquito. This part of the story I can vouch for, so far as seeing his commissions for both offices justifies me in doing. More changes having come "o'er the spirit of his dream," he is now what we found him. Instead of dispensing justice, he breaks the laws by selling whisky to the Indians, which is a money-making, though villanous, trade, and one punishable with a heavy fine by the laws of Vancouver's Island. Old Harris was not long since "had up," I believe, for this offence, being about eighty years of age at the time.

Through the hunting expeditions which I have mentioned, and several other shorter trips which we made during our stay, I picked up a great deal of useful information. The time of the year was bad for sport, and frequently, when we had got within distance of our game, the enormous ferns, growing from six to eight feet high, prevented us getting a shot.

I will now describe what I consider the most necessary articles to take with one when going on a shooting expedition through a comparatively wild country. A stout suit of Scotch tweed is the best and most comfortable for ordinary wear; besides a suit of flannel for a change and to sleep in. These will be found sufficient clothing, whether you are going for a week or a month. When the nights are cold, both a blanket and a rug will be required to sleep in, but in mild weather either will be found sufficient. A frying-pan, a camp-kettle, and a tin platter and cup for each person are indispensable, also a small American axe. For provisions, of course, a great deal depends on the kind of country in which you intend to camp, and the likelihood of game; but, if it is a good country, some lard for frying, and a good stock of hard biscuits, and a little flour, and some meat for immediate use, will always repay the trouble of its carriage. You will discover this if you find game scarce. A small wooden barrel, to hold two or three bottles of whisky or brandy, should also be provided. The romance of sleeping under the starry expanse of an unclouded heaven is very likely to be dispelled in a disagreeable manner, except in very mild weather, by colds, rheumatic pains, etc., unless one is an old hand at it, and can stand getting wet through. Nature is much more indulgent in this respect to the man who spends most of his life on the open prairies or in the forest;

such a one will never fear rheumatism, and colds do not come within the catalogue of his complaints; it is the effeminate man of society, whom Nature knows not, and whom she treats sharply, that must provide for himself a tent or build a hut of the fir-tree.

Not very long after our arrival at Esquimalt, the Governor of the Island gave his annual ball on the Queen's birthday, and invitations were sent to all the officers of the men-of-war in the harbour. I took advantage of the invitation, principally to see what the rank, youth, and beauty of Victoria and its environs were like, and I must candidly chronicle that my first impressions of Victorian society were anything but favourable. To judge from appearances, many of the fair guests were unearthed and brought to light only for that one especial evening during the year, for the invitations of the governor of a small colony generally includes everybody of any respectability in it. The male portion of the assembly was formed principally of officials and naval officers, and, with the young ladies, the amount of gold lace worn appeared to carry the day. This reminds me of a story concerning one of these said young ladies, who was, I believe, born and certainly brought up in the colony. Being at a dance where, as is usual in Vancouver's Island, the naval blue was rendered conspicuous by the number of its wearers, a midshipman was introduced and claimed her

hand for a dance. She gave it, but they had not long mingled "'mid the mazy throng" when she exclaimed, "What would my Ma say, if she knew I was dancing with a midshipman?" The middy, possibly thinking a little rudeness in retaliation was justifiable in such a case, undauntedly asked, "And what would my Ma say, if she knew I was dancing with a squaw?"

Victoria, which is the capital of Vancouver's Island and British Columbia, since the union of the two colonies, I fear, has seen its best days, and is on the road to insignificance and poverty, unless some piece of good fortune visits it to effect its rescue. It first sprung into notability in 1858, when, gold having been discovered in apparently great quantities up the Fraser River, a rush was made for the new diggings. People passed through Victoria on their way from California and all parts of the globe, and owing partly to this and its being the terminus of the lines of steamers, Victoria became important, and the sea-port and commercial town of the mines. Stores and gambling saloons were run up, wharves constructed, and the town soon presented all the characteristics of that wild, reckless, and, I may also say, villanous hot-bed, a mining community. But the tide of prosperity which had flowed so rapidly was soon discovered to have also as rapid an ebb. The mines were not sufficiently productive to remunerate for the expense

of working and carriage of the gold, and the disappointed gold-seekers had to retrace their steps, and their attendant parasites endeavour to find more profitable fields for their schemes.

Since that time the fortunes of Victoria have frequently risen and again fallen, according as mines have been discovered, or reported to have been, which interested people thought profitable, or led others to believe so. Thus every year or two an excitement springs up for the hour, bringing a few hundred more eager than wary speculators from California or elsewhere. But it quickly subsides, leaving the Victorians, who, while it lasts, brighten up once more, and congratulate each other on the good times which are coming for the colony, to again ponder gloomily over their blighted hopes. In 1862 all the crowds had vanished, but the excitement caused by the mines did serious damage to the colony from an agricultural point of view. Many men who had previously been steadily plodding on towards independence were led away into the whirl of speculation, and their neglected farms were again allowed to relapse into a wilderness. Many colonists are still holding on, like Mr. Micawber, "waiting for something to turn up," unable to resume their old occupation of farming, and still dreaming of making their fortunes by some more speedy method. However, the majority of farmers, many of whom have

come out since the gold excitement, are recovering from the depressing effects of the reaction consequent on the rush, and are steadily building up their future independence.

During our stay at Esquimalt a vessel arrived from England with some forty girls on board, brought to the Colony as domestic servants. They were in great request, and readily got situations. When returning from Cowichin in the steamer I met a farmer on his way to Victoria, where he was in hopes of getting a wife from among the new arrivals. I heard afterwards that he was unsuccessful in his wooings. He made overtures to many of the damsels, but none seemed to care for a good and comfortable home when it had attached to it a rather unattractive husband. His last addresses were paid to a girl whom the governor had hired as a maid-servant. My persevering, but unfortunate, acquaintance had not, I believe, seen her until going to the hall door. He rang the bell, and she appeared in answer to it. Without very much introduction to the subject, he boldly asked her to come away with him at once, and enter the holy state of matrimony. The girl, not accustomed to Colonial courtships, was naturally much overcome, and began to cry, refusing however, to leave her situation. He in vain urged his inducements, but, she remaining firm, he had to return to Cowichin, a dispirited and disappointed, though, perhaps, a wiser man.

After some months' stay at Vancouver's Island, during part of which we paid a round of visits to Nanaimo, the Fraser River, and the bone of contention, the island of San Juan, we left the North for other parts of the station, San Francisco being our first port of call.

CHAPTER VII.

"There was a sound of revelry by night."

THE country surrounding San Francisco is of a very unvaried nature, every hill being of the same smooth, undulating appearance as its neighbour, and no timber or brushwood is visible from the anchorage, if we except the town and suburbs of Oaklands, on the opposite side of the water; where, on an unusually clear day, we can distinguish the dim wave of the miniature trees with which its streets are lined. No, one sadly misses here the pleasant woodland or pastoral scenes which surround nearly every town in the old country, or which are within easy reach of them. The valley, with its variegated fields of corn or pasture—its hedgerows and lanes—its sparkling rivulet and clusters of venerable trees—its whitewashed cottages, peeping out from their gardens—and the spire of a church rising amidst the yews, is a picture not to be seen in the neighbourhood of San Francisco. Its inhabitants have to be content with much less interesting scenery, and with little variety, in its immediate neighbourhood. "Will you come for a drive to Cliff House?" was

an offer constantly made to us by our friends on shore. It is the only drive or ride that San Francisco possesses; and on the road the good folk of the city show off their traps and endeavour to outvie each other in the possession of the fastest team. The Cliff House is a large hotel, built on a bold promontory on the south side of the entrance to the harbour, and is about six miles from the town. The balcony of the hotel overhangs the cliff, and right under one's feet the ocean comes rolling and tumbling in, in one mass of seething foam. There are several large rocks parted from the parent cliff, and on these quantities of sea-lions disport themselves, taking no notice whatever of the people in the balcony overhead, though they are not a hundred yards distant. It is altogether a charming view on a fine day, for on the right the golden gates show out well, the deep blue waters of the Pacific stretching away till they almost become blended with the sky in the distant horizon, dotted here and there with the snowy canvas of a coasting craft, or messenger from some other clime.

It is also a beautiful sight when (like fair Melrose) it is visited by the pale moonlight, for then distant objects are but dimly seen, and assume fantastic and ghostly shapes, while nearer ones are bathed in that misty, soft light which is so attractive; the sea is surging and moaning in the half light down below, and, mingling with the melancholy sound of

its waves, comes the plaintive cry of the sea-lion from his rocky home.

About a mile on from the Cliff House is situated the Ocean-side House, to which one gets by a pleasant drive along the hard sands, with the surf washing the wheels of the carriage, and heavy rollers breaking in close proximity. A different road to the direct one to Cliff House leads back from it to the city. Both these hotels have large, commodious rooms for dancing, etc., and parties frequently drive out after dinner and make use of them. I accompanied a party of friends one night for a drive out and dance. We numbered altogether fourteen, and were at first going in a six-in-hand drag, but the gentleman who invited us having come to the conclusion that smaller traps would be preferable, as they were more sociable, determined to dismiss the drag and order other vehicles.

I give an idea of the rate people here charge. He had to give the man who brought the drag, for waiting five minutes, the sum of $10 (£2). At length we got "fixed" all right in two pair and two single-horse traps, and about 10.30 p.m. started away at a good pace.

The Americans cultivate a trotting speed in their horses in preference to galloping, and the trotting-matches of the United States are famous everywhere. The distance from San Francisco to the Cliff House (six miles) has, I believe on one or two occasions,

been done in about twenty-two minutes. Though our horses were hardly up to that speed, still they were what would be considered in England very fast goers, and the rapid drive by moonlight was very exhilarating. We stopped a few minutes at the Cliff House, but determined to go on to the Ocean-side House, as being quieter and more select. A messmate and myself had brought some bandsmen from the ship, and soon after our arrival we commenced dancing in the large room of the hotel. A good supper was served, and we enjoyed ourselves so thoroughly that we did not start back for the city till day was breaking. All felt that we quite agreed with Tom Moore as to the best way of lengthening our days being to steal a few hours from the night. After a delightful drive back in the fresh morning air, we got to bed about six a.m., having regularly "made a night of it."

A pleasant stay of eight weeks at San Francisco closed with a farewell ball, given on the night previous to our departure, by the leading citizens, in honour of our admiral and his officers. Everything that could be done to render the ball as complimentary as possible was carried into effect by the good taste of the committee of management. The envelopes, containing the cards of invitation, bore the American and English flags entwined, with the ship's name in the centre. The ball was held in a spacious room called the Pacific Hall; at one end

was a gallery with seats arranged for those who preferred looking on to dancing, so chaperones and wall-flowers did not encumber the space intended for dancers. There were two bands, one placed in the gallery, to play operatic selections between the dances, the other at the further end of the room, almost hid by a semi-circle of moss and roses, which was also a great ornament to the hall. On the arrival of the admiral and the officers, the bands played "God Save the Queen," and repeated the compliment at our departure. The toilets and supper were perfection, and all the arrangements conducted on a magnificent scale. Everything that tended to show that we carried with us the kind wishes and friendship of our entertainers was said and done.

We did not break up till late in the morning, and I preferred accepting the offer of a bed at the house of a friend to going on board at that hour. But whether it was from the amount of physical exertion I had gone through, or from the number of glasses in which I had pledged my friends and drank to future meetings, or whether from the combination of both, I know not; however, I did not get on board till the anchor was being weighed, and deservedly received a "rubbing down" from the "stern, cold man with nought of sympathy," whose duty it is to administer these verbal chastisements to erring subordinates.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Ye say they all have passed away,
That noble race and brave,
That their light canoe has vanished
Fro. . off the crested wave.
That in the forest where they roamed
There rings no huntsman's shout;
But their names are on your waters,
And ye may not wash them out."

As we gaze on the San Francisco of to-day, and mentally compare it with what it was some five-and-twenty years ago, we are filled with wonder and admiration. A few Roman Catholic missions had been established through the country, but the site of what is now the finest city of Western America was then in a most primitive condition. A few settlers had fixed their dwellings, not amounting in all to more than a dozen houses, close to the water; but these few settlers were the pioneers of one of the mightiest achievements of civilization. As each succeeding gold mine was discovered in California, and mother earth gave birth to more and more of the precious metal, it became necessary that a seaport should be used. The long, laborious journey across the plains of Central America was too tedious

for the eager fortune hunters, whose goal was the treasure-yielding land of the West, and the route was too dangerous and precarious to trust to for the transmission of the proceeds of their toil, so lines of steamers were put on from the Eastern States to Aspinwall, and from Panama to the Golden City. The railway was constructed across the Isthmus of Panama, and San Francisco became the acknowledged city and harbour of the future. From that time it became golden, not only in name, but in reality. As year succeeded year, it continued spreading its streets far back from the edge of the bay, and its ample storehouses and spacious wharves are now built on acres of land reclaimed from the sea. On landing, one is surprised at the fine stores, large markets, and handsome buildings which present themselves on every hand. Commodious and substantial public offices, luxurious clubs, theatres, and opera-houses now stand where, little more than a quarter of a century back, the Indian built his lowly wigwam.

Thus in our own day may we contemplate the wondrous changes wrought by all-conquering man. Till yesterday California was unknown. Its exhaustless treasures, the riches of its mountains and valleys, its fertile plains, forests, and waters were but as the visions of a dream to the civilized world, and as a sealed book to the occupants of the country. But where are they now?—these dwellers in the

land for centuries, whose code of honour and laws of hospitality shamed the hollow show of civilization—where are they now? Gone, like leaves before the autumn gale. For, like some mighty fire sweeping through a forest, utterly withering up and demolishing every root and branch, the onward march of the white man is the fatal destroyer, from which the Indian cannot hope to escape, and, except in some remote counties in California, it may be almost said the red man is less often seen than the grizzly bear.

The poor savage of America has indeed little left him in the hunting grounds of his ancestors. Before the white man, landing on the western coast, he has rapidly been driven to the mountain ranges of the interior, where he meets his longer hunted, though, perhaps, braver and nobler, brother of the East, also retreating before the grasping hand of the invader of his birthright. No cheering prospect is left them in this world; bereft of homestead, hunting grounds, and the roving life they love, they are pent up in some Indian reservation, or amidst the wild fastnesses of the Sierra Nevada and the Rocky Mountains, quickly passing off the face of the land. They are at war with all men, and all men's hands are turned against them. The "brave" of the battle-field, the sagacious adviser at the council fire, the persevering, wily pursuer on the war trail, in fact, the romantic, heroic Indian most of us have

read of and admired, is now a thing of the past. The unfortunate remnant of that noble race, who have lived to see the downfall of their tribes and the utter departure of all their ancient glory, may well gaze on the setting sun from summits of the mighty mountains of their forefathers, and read their fate in his departing rays.

But I must stop my pen-and-ink soliloquy, and go on with my few crude impressions of modern San Francisco. On first acquaintance with the country, a stranger accustomed to the moderate prices of the old world and the uses of copper coinage is forcibly struck with the high prices charged for everything; no "browns" are in use, and the lowest silver coin (now almost obsolete) is worth twopence halfpenny. The agricultural labourer gets from two to two and a half dollars (eight to ten shillings) per day, and a skilled mechanic, of course, very much higher pay. But lodging, clothing, and food are all so expensive that a labourer here has very nearly as much trouble to make both ends meet comfortably as he has on the less imposing scale of wages given at home. It is no exaggeration to say that in England a shilling goes as far as a dollar out here. When travelling by a river steam-boat, I have had to pay four and twopence, or one dollar, for a bottle of beer. I ordered it without knowing the price, and avoided such expensive luxuries afterwards. To take a retrograde look at prices, Captain L——, of the Pacific S.S.

Co., told me that on his first landing at San Francisco, I think in the year 1847, he paid for his breakfast the sum of nine dollars (one pound seventeen)! This expensive meal consisted of two eggs, a cup of coffee, and some bread and butter.

The hotels of San Francisco are a source of surprise and admiration to all visitors. Their number size, and flourishing condition appear unaccountable to an Englishman, while their comfort, cleanliness, and good living please him. With a population, I believe, of only 150,000, it keeps up many first-class hotels of enormous size. Amongst them are the Grand Hotel, the Occidental, the Cosmopolitan, the Lick House; and, amongst the less fashionable ones, the Russ House, What Cheer House, besides very many smaller ones, and boarding houses. The reason why hotels in America receive so much more support than they do in the old country is owing to the excessive wages required by domestic servants, the high rate of house-rent and the large expense of furnishing; so that many families, and I think I may say almost all bachelors, find it the most economical to live in one of these monster hotels or at a boarding house. The charge at the good hotels for board and lodging is from two to three dollars a day.

San Francisco is of too rapid a growth and too young in years to have a proper *élite* or well defined society, but, of course, like other places, it has its "upper ten," though it is not to be asked "who

th_y are?"—they must be taken as they come. And so it must be in every rapidly-rising community, where the man who cleans one's boots, or leaves the butcher's meat to-day, may to-morrow, by some lucky hit in real estate or other speculation (all Californians speculate more or less), become a rich man.

It is a strange thing that few men who start for America in early life, with the intention of gaining comfort and independence for their latter years, return to England when their object is attained; although at the commencement of their career the hope of doing so is frequently the loadstone and guiding star of their existence, and the thought bears them manfully through many a weary struggle. I do not think that their love for their native land diminishes much, I do not think they believe America to be a happier country or nearly so well governed as their own, but the great difficulty is for a man to tear himself away from the every-day associations and customs of the best part of a life-time. I speak more of men who may be considered as belonging to the shopkeeper or upper labouring classes in the old country. When they rise a little in the world, and are able to "guess" about their "real estate lots," they find themselves eligible for the society of those with whom they at first considered it an honour to associate, but afterwards come to look upon as a right. It is to a great extent this feeling which prevents many from risking their gained posi-

tion by returning to their native towns, where they know they can never succeed in banishing the recollection of what they once were. This money-making-society's equality possesses the real charm.

There is also, possibly, a more neighbourly, free and easy style of acquaintance kept up in American cities. It is the usual custom, if time permits, to ask a friend to take a drink, and it is never considered the correct thing to refuse unless for some special reason. I have heard of cases, and I believe they were not uncommon, which occurred some years back in San Francisco, of men being shot dead for refusing to drink when asked at a bar, for it was at that time considered a direct insult to the inviter.

An American gentleman, who was speaking to me of a visit he had recently made to England with the possible intention of remaining there, gave one or two of the reasons why he did not do so. He said he always felt lonely and strange on going out into the streets; there were no familiar faces to meet, no old cronies to chat with on the events of the day, and, what he seemed to consider the most important of all, he sighingly said, "No one ever asked me to take a drink." He had near relations in England, but ones he had not seen for many long years, and who were, therefore, all but strangers to him, so he thought it best to return to the land where he had made his money and his friends.

San Francisco certainly is one of the fastest and

most go-a-head places on the face of the globe. It is nothing there to meet the man who shaved one in the morning for a quarter of a dollar driving his pair in the evening on the Cliff House Road, and the probabilities are that he offers to race for half a dozen of champagne; or to see a chief detective officer sitting side by side in a trap with some noted gambler or swindler, who, if one chances to meet him at a bar on the roadside, will most likely ask, "Well, cap'en, what will you take to drink?" and would feel himself grossly insulted if anyone considered himself too good to accept the offer.

CHAPTER IX.

"Was man ordain'd the slave of man to toil?
Yok'd with the brutes and fettered to the soil?
Weigh'd in a tyrant's balance with his gold?
No! Nature stamped us in a heavenly mould."

THE reaction of a dull sea life, after a stay of several weeks at a pleasant, lively place like San Francisco, is very depressing. The little amusements generally resorted to on board ship to while away time during a voyage appear very slow, and one feels more inclined to seek consolation in a pipe, and ponder over bygone pleasures. This state of mind, however, soon passes away, and we begin to enter once more into the life around us, and to speculate on the manner of country we are bound for, instead of wasting time in vain regrets. Looking at life at sea, when divested of the false colouring with which many people see fit to embellish it, one becomes aware of a perfect blank in existence. It is keeping body and soul together by eating, drinking, and sleeping, but it is not *living*. A man is dead to all intents and purposes for the time. Kingdoms may be overthrown, empires rise or fall, republics be esta-

blished; he is as little conscious of the changes as he would be were he beneath the sea instead of sailing over it. He is exiled, and cut off from home and friends; and so a sailor goes through life, alternately being buried to the world and restored to it again. One thing, however, there is to be said in favour of this chequered career, which is, that, when he does return to life, he has always a powerful zest for its enjoyments. That is a very true saying of Dr. Johnson's—"A ship is a floating prison, with the additional chance of being drowned."

After a quick passage from San Francisco, we arrived at Panama, at the time Sir Charles Bright was there with his expedition, for the purpose of laying the shore end of the Aspinwall and Jamaica submarine telegraph. The good people of Panama were just about giving a ball to him, to show the high esteem they held him in for his many valuable services to telegraphy. We received invitations, and also a request for our band, which was, of course, gladly complied with. The ball was held in the Town-hall, or Court-house, where the scales of Justice are balanced by the dingy alcaldes of the place, who, I am afraid, look on dollars as testimony of weight, and, therefore, to be taken as evidence. In the lower story was the guard-room and lock-up, or every-day prison for ordinary criminals, who were enabled to raise the spirits of

the guests as they passed up the stairs, by grinning at them in a ghastly manner through their prison bars. The ball-room was almost totally devoid of ornament, and very rightly too, in the hot weather of Panama; but the verandah had designs in gas-jets about it, and the pillars were enwreathed in green-stuff, which produced quite a bowery appearance. The fairest—I cannot say fair—portion of the guests were arrayed in high morning dresses, of many gay and lively colours, some strangely contrasting with the dark olive complexions of the wearers. I will honestly confess, however, that the grapes were sour to me that evening, for not only were there some ten gentlemen to one lady, but the majority of the charmers only spoke Spanish, and, however musically the cadences of their silvery voices fell on the ear, they fell upon *our* understandings in a most unintelligible manner. The heat of the room was excessive, so cigars, iced drinks, and the verandah were more in vogue amongst naval officers than the ball-room.

After a few days at Panama, the ship moved to anchorage off the Island of Tobago, which I have before mentioned, for the purpose of watering, and giving leave to the men; unfortunately, the latter was productive of fatal consequences. A number of the men, composed chiefly of the younger seamen, called ordinaries, who are in a state of transition

from boyhood to manhood, molested and insulted the natives, committing one or two robberies of spirits, etc.; this led to the natives mustering in force, and driving these ordinary seamen (though superior in numbers) down to the beach. There was a great deal of stone throwing, and the Alcalde of the village, whilst endeavouring to quell the disturbance, was struck on the head. Although he received immediate medical assistance from the ship, he died a few hours afterwards. The whole affair was very much to the discredit of our men, who, though numerically and physically the stronger, and also the aggressors, ran away in a most cowardly manner directly they met with any opposition. After this affair, several perfectly inoffensive and respectable men belonging to the ship were attacked by the natives, as they were returning quietly from walks in the country, though none were injured severely.

These occurrences necessitated our remaining several days longer at Tobago than had been intended, as an investigation by the civil authorities was instituted. During this time we had a christening on board. A child of Mr. Wilson's, the obliging manager of the Boston Ice House Company, had been recently born, and its mother, a New York lady, was glad of the opportunity which our stay presented of obtaining the services of a clergyman of the Episcopal Church. The

christening was made the occasion for a large gathering of the friends of the family. A steamer, belonging to Mr. Wilson's father-in-law, was used to bring the party on board. I chanced to be sleeping on shore the night previous to the visit, and was asked to join them in the trip across, and breakfast on board the steamer. We had half a mile to pull out to get on board, and then a ten-mile passage to Tobago. There were preparations for a most sumptuous breakfast being made, troops of servants bustling about with turkeys, cases of champagne, and pyramids of ice. I, for one, was longing for the time to commence, as it was past noon; but, unfortunately, all the ladies, and many of the gentlemen, became horribly sea-sick—which was very annoying for a sailor with a good appetite—so the breakfast hour was deferred till such time as we should be lying peacefully at anchor under lee of the Island of Tobago. After breakfast was over, the flag-ship's boats came to take the party to the larger ship, where the operation of christening was proceeded with. Our parson, unused, as I suppose all naval parsons must be, to the duty, nearly choked the unfortunate infant by baling several handfuls of water into its mouth, eyes, and nose, thereby making its mamma very wrath. We finished up with a dance, for there were some five and twenty ladies on board, who would otherwise have been very much disappointed; amongst

them many darked-eyed señoritas, natives of Panama, with whom dancing consisted of only the mechanical action, no exchange of ideas taking place, except when one could button-hole a gentleman who was fitted to act as interpreter, and through him make complimentary speeches, smiling, smirking, and bowing during the time of their translation, at the end of which the señorita would smile and bow in return.

Towards evening the party returned to their own steamer. On their way home they steamed round us, fired a gun, and dipped their ensign, while, as they departed, cheer after cheer came across the water, to show their appreciation of our hospitality.

After a few days further waiting we were enabled to make a start for Payta, a port in Peru, where we hoped to get a last mail from England before setting out on a long cruise for the southern part of the station.

Payta is certainly one of the most forsaken and uninviting looking places I have ever set eyes on. It is built on a low shore between the beach and a line of rough, broken sand hills. If one could imagine a village, built in the very earliest days of village building, with low one-storied houses, composed of wicker-work and mud plaster, and roofed with reeds and sticks, heated in a large furnace for a number of years, and then set down on a small plain of

sand, with dirty, yellow-looking hills for a back-ground, he can form an idea of the appearance of Payta; though, of course, the few Europeans have much better dwellings. There is nothing green, or fresh, or pleasing to be seen in the neighbourhood; there is no fresh water for twenty miles, and all that distance it has to be conveyed on donkeys. So no great inducements were offered for leaving the ship, unless for a trip to the interior, or after alligators, numbers of which can be shot at a river to the northward to Payta. Three of our officers paid it a visit, and were successful in shooting some half-dozen, and a quantity of pigeons.

Two fine, clean, and fast-looking merchant ships were at anchor with us in the bay, and I have a word or two to say, which I think will be interesting, concerning their line of commerce. Of late years a prosperous trade has sprung up between China, and Peru, and Chili, which promises fairly to eclipse the old African slave-trade in its enormous returns and the impunity with which it is carried on. Now, by the laws of the Celestial Empire, and by virtue of decrees issued by the most potent brother of the sun and moon, no one of his pig-tailed subjects is allowed to emigrate, or, at least, only with special permission. But the services of our friend, John Chinaman, are in great requisition in many lands where wages are high and labour scarce, and his country is overrun with fine scamp-

ping young fellows, whom it is a pity to see wasting their lives in idleness and want, when, if they only knew it, they might be tilling the ground and reaping the harvest in some more blessed land, and so turning the rich gifts of Providence to account. Seeing these things, some wise philanthropists put their heads together, and hit upon a plan by which the labour of Chinamen was to be imported into countries in need of it; thus benefiting different peoples and nations, and—putting dollars into their own pockets.

The following is the course generally pursued, as sketched to me by the captain of a merchant ship: Macao is the port from whence the coolies are usually shipped, for that place is in the hands of the Portuguese, who are only too happy to have the chance of turning a penny; besides, it is a business all the more easily carried on by avoiding the interference of the Chinese officials, who would naturally expect something for themselves. Now, there is a law in China by which if a Chinaman owes another a certain sum of money he becomes his creditor's property, bodily at least, if unable to pay the debt, until he has worked a sufficient equivalent in labour to liquidate the claim, when he is again free. It is on this law that the whole of the coolie trade hinges. The two great vices of Chinamen are gambling and opium smoking. If enabled by any means to gratify these degrading tastes to the full extent of their

inclination, they become perfectly oblivious to all else in life, sacrificing their comfort, health, and frequently their lives, on the altars of their idols. A cargo of coolies is required by some enterprising merchant. Due notice is given, and the machinery set to work. Natives, in the employ of the Portuguese, or ships' agent, at Macao, spread themselves through the neighbouring country and villages, and frequent the opium houses, cock fights, and gambling hells; here they attach themselves to the most likely men for their purpose—and they have a large number to choose from—to whom, when their money is spent and wasted, they advance small sums, always taking care to have legal acknowledgments, till sufficient is lent to place the insatiable borrower in their power, and render him their slave by the law. The "runners," as they are called, bring their gangs to Macao, when they have collected a sufficient number, in readiness for the ship. The coolies, as they may now be called, here have their position explained to them. They are told of a prosperous and healthy country, a land overflowing with milk and honey (or, rather, opium and fighting-cocks), where they can go and work themselves free of their creditors, where they will get $1·50 a-week, enormous wages for a Chinaman; everything is painted to them *couleur de rose*. All that is required of them is to bind themselves by contract for eight years, at the end of which time they will again be free

men and able to return to China to their friends and home, with their fortunes made; also, when they have signed the agreement and shipped on board, they will receive $75 and two good suits of clothes.

The unsuspecting pig-tail eagerly grasps at the offer; in it he sees redemption from his present state of utter destitution and want; visions of a bright future shine on his cloudy brain; he would never be the possessor of so much wealth as he thinks he will acquire if he remained in China for three men's lives, instead of one opium smoker's short one, and lastly, and more immediately, his good suits of clothes are very few and far between. Things are done in a perfectly fair and above-board manner. The coolies are taken on board the ship, and one by one are brought into the cabin, where the captain, the agent, and the "runners" receive them. John Chinaman's eyes begin to glisten as he sees a table covered with piles of shining, tempting-looking dollars. He has never dreamt of, much less seen, such wealth. The agent beckons him, and he signs or marks his deed of agreement for so many years, under the above stipulations. "Now here are your $75," says the agent. John utters an exclamation of ecstacy, and rushes towards the inviting heap. "But stay a minute," says Mr. Agent, "this man (pointing to the 'runner') claims $40 which he has lent you, and for which he has your acknowledgments." John's face falls as he sees his

dollars paid away, but he still feels pretty contented at the prospect of getting the remainder. "Now, what nice suits of clothes you have got," continues his tormentor; "you cannot expect to have them for nothing," and he sweeps the remaining $35 into his pocket. And now John sets up his dismal wail of lamentation, and will not be comforted for the loss of so many dollars within his grasp. But he is booked and done for, and must only go and work out his stipulated period of service. Nothing in the transactions can be termed illegal, all is down in black and white, and the laws of the country, and against the slave trade, strictly respected.

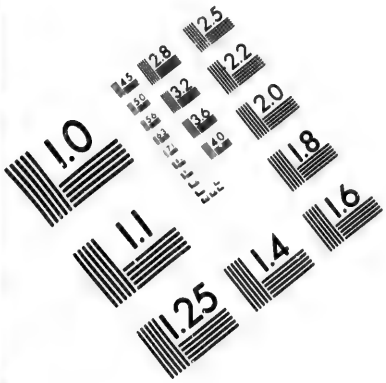
What is most to be feared is a mutiny amongst the coolies during the passage, and against this every precaution is taken. The ships are well and comfortably fitted up, ventilation being thoroughly looked to—very different from the old African slavers—iron gratings are fitted over every hatchway, and iron partitions put up between decks, so as to allow only a certain number of the coolies to be together in one place. A large iron cage is made to go over the waist of the ship which confines them to that part when they are allowed up for their regular airings, a certain number only coming up at a time. A broad bridge runs fore and aft from the poop to the forecastle, where a watch can be kept, and from which the coolies can be brought to submission if necessary. One means is some-

times very effectively resorted to when the coolies become insubordinate or mutinous; they invariably turn their faces upwards towards the men on the bridge, vociferating and yelling, when a few handfuls of snuff and pepper sprinkled over them doubles them all up, and sets them a coughing and crying, and they soon quiet down again. The crew of the coolie-ship is double the usual number—all picked men and well armed. I do not intend to say that *all* the ships engaged in this traffic are so well prepared and fitted up as the class I have described; if they were, the mutinies, burnings, and sometimes total loss of coolie ships at sea, no one living to tell the tale, would not be so frequent.

The coolie costs the shippers to get him safely to the port of destination, including the expenses of runners, of the crew, provisions, time fitting the ship up, etc.. some $150 per head. On the arrival of the ship at the market, some $350 and $400 are willingly paid by the owners of estates, plantations, or works for each Chinaman, which leaves a clear profit of over $200 per head; by no means a bad speculation, if it is well conducted and all goes smoothly. The two ships lying at Payta with us had been very successful. One of them had only lost sixty coolies out of some seven hundred or eight hundred, during the passage from China, and the other had, I believe, lost none at all. Another shipload was expected shortly, the three belonging to the same

speculators. So, if all continues to go well, these little trips will be the means of putting nearly one hundred thousand pounds into the pockets of the benevolent philanthropists aforesaid.

Huge rafts are used for loading and unloading ships at Payta, as, owing to the shallowness of the water, cargo-boats drawing much could not be got near the beach. For two days these rafts were employed taking coolies on shore, and, as every square inch of the conveyance was covered, they became nearly submerged, and presented the strange appearance of some hundreds of Chinamen moving across the water without any apparent means of support. A large building was used for housing the coolies on shore; here they were strictly confined, not one being allowed ouside, except once a-day, when the whole were formed into solemn procession—four deep, with guards at intervals—and taken out for a constitutional airing along the beach, Chinese music, in the shape of drums and cymbals, heading the column, and making a discord which even a Highlander's ear would have shrunk from. The poor devils did not appear particularly happy, and if any lagged behind, or got out of place, which some often did in a sleepy sort of manner, a gentle reminder over the head from the stick of one of the guards soon brought them back from any dream of the Celestial Empire in which they might have been indulging.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There is one remark I would make in favour of Payta, and that is touching its wonderful climate. Situated within a few degrees of the line, on the borders of a sandy desert, it enjoys a climate which is denied to many towns and districts in higher latitudes. Its water is cold, and at night a covering is required, while during the day it never appears too warm to carry on ordinary occupations. All this is to be attributed to the antarctic current, which, after its passage through warmer regions, still strikes with much of its original coldness against this favoured coast.

From Payta our course lay for Conception Bay, in the southern part of Chili. During this voyage I saw a whaler's boats at work among a school of whales. It is a sight few sailors even—not engaged in whaling—ever witness, and one of the most interesting and exciting spectacles I have ever seen.

After a tolerably quick passage, we anchored off the town of Tomé, which is the seaport of Conception, a town much larger in size and greater in importance, and the seat of the Provincial Government. The surrounding country, at first sight, presents a very unattractive appearance, especially in summer, as then the hills are barren of everything except a species of low bush, which patches them here and there; but, if we land and ascend these bleak-looking ranges, the valleys below, running into the interior, present a much more inviting

aspect. Green fields, lined with stately poplars, blossoming gardens trim and well-kept enclosures, with their rows of refreshing vegetables ready for market, these, with the house of the farmer, nestling amongst shady evergreens, are before us; while, like a huge serpent, a river or stream meanders from side to side of the valley, the origin and support of the verdure which renders the picture so charming.

On the arrival of the ship at Conception Bay, I received my promotion, and, being thus released from my arduous duties, I started for several days, with some brother officers, for some shooting near the town of Conception, which is well worth a visit in itself. Our object was, as I say, to have a shot at wild fowl or anything we could come across fit for a bag, for, though it was not the shooting season in Chili, it was the time of year when in the old country we naturally expect shooting; and a long sea voyage gives a greater zest for a good walk over wild country, gun in hand. Our unsportsmanlike shooting was, however, not very productive, about five-and-twenty brace of duck, snipe, pigeons, and partridge constituting our bag.

The plains of Walpen, where we went, are situated some eight miles from Conception, and, to judge from appearances and report, there must be as good snipe and duck shooting in the season as the fondest sportsman need desire. Conception presents the usual appearance of Chili towns, straggling houses

with large gardens and quantities of fruit trees. It possesses a very pretty, well-kept plaza, with beds of flowers within the outer line of trees, and a space in the centre with a fountain and seats.

I travelled during this trip, for the first time, with five horses abreast in a coach. It is the usual way in Chili, though a great part of the outside horses' drawing power is lost; however, over a steep, hilly road, with abrupt turnings, the corners can be "rounded" much more easily and safely with this kind of team than any other.

CHAPTER X.

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar (?)."

I WILL now pass on to the historical island of Juan Fernandez, known to almost every English boy, through Defoe's famous story of "Robinson Crusoe." We sailed for it from Conception Bay, *en route* for Valparaiso.

Alexander Selkirk was landed on it, from a man-of-war (of those days), in English Bay, totally destitute of any means of supporting himself beyond what nature had provided on the island; he, however, managed to support life for a miserable four years and a half without ever seeing or speaking to a living soul. A fresh little stream sparkles down the centre of the valley where he was landed, and, with the help of wild goats' meat, fish, &c., he subsisted.

The cave, or rather large opening in the rock, where Selkirk lived, still shows, by its black and charred roof, and an appearance of being hollowed out underneath, the uses to which it has been put.

As stated in the tablet erected to his memory, he was taken off the island by a privateer at the end of the above period. He was a great friend of Defoe's, and the narrative of his life and sufferings on the island gave Defoe a foundation for the most interesting book of its kind ever written.

This island, some years back, was used as a convict settlement by the Chilian Government, who took possession of it on discovering that a considerable trade in sandal-wood had been carried on from it by a party of settlers without paying the taxes due to the Chilian Republic, to whom the island nominally belonged. The Government caused all the sandal-wood trees to be wantonly destroyed—a most narrow-minded policy—and, when this was apparently accomplished, they offered liberation to any convict who should succeed in discovering another. A second mode of effecting liberation offered to the convicts was, I believe, to ascend the highest mountain in the island—called the "Anvil," the summit of which is broad and flat-looking. Its sides, in some places, present sheer precipices of hundreds of feet in height, whilst its base is covered with thick, stunted, and almost impenetrable forest. No ascent was ever made that I could hear of, and several lives were lost in the attempt. These convicts were shamefully treated: confined in damp caves cut out of the side of a hill, they had to pass their lives on this lonely island, far from all civilisa-

tion or sympathy, without regular food or clothing. The caves can still be seen, seven in number, sad witnesses of the inhuman manner in which these men were treated.

The island of Juan Fernandez presents the most striking appearance of wild and abruptly precipitous mountain scenery I ever remember to have seen. Though small in actual circumference, from the water's edge it rises, with the exception of Cumberland and English bays, in bold and massive mountains, which, towards the interior, shoot up into lofty peaks or inaccessible table-like summits. The slopes of these mountains, running down to the valleys, are covered with a species of wild oat, which gives luxuriant pasturage to the many flocks of wild goats which abound on the island, rendering their flesh unusually palatable. Pulling along under the gigantic cliffs, hundreds of feet in height, one constantly sees a herd of these extraordinarily sure-footed animals, springing from one projecting rock to another upon the face of the cliff, gaining a greater height, scared by the strange sound of the human voice echoing through their lonely haunts—though puny man is, in this case, harmless. At length they become no larger than flies, and the head grows dizzy as the eye endeavours to follow their gambols along the brink of the overhanging precipice.

Between two of the most lofty peaks is the spot

from where Alexander Selkirk kept his look-out. The view it commands is magnificent. Spread out beneath and around one are valley, cliff, mountain, glen, and forest, in the hundreds of different shapes and moulds in which nature has thought fit to fantastically cast the surface of this little island. One cannot help trying to picture to oneself the solitary man, as morning after morning he d earily plodded up the rugged path he had worn to his look-out, and, as he reached the spot, turning his weary eye to scan the broad, placid ocean which spread its cheerless face before him; or how, hoping against hope, he longingly gazed on the distant horizon, thinking that, as the heavy hours dragged on, some messenger from the far-off world might appear in sight, and rescue him from despairing solitude. The following short history is inscribed on a tablet:—

"In memory of Alexander Selkirk, mariner, a native of Largo, in the county of Fife, Scotland, who lived on this island in complete solitude for four years and four months. He was landed from the 'Cinque Ports' galley, 96 tons, 16 guns, A.D. 1704, and was taken off in the 'Duke' privateer, 12th February, 1709. He died lieutenant of H.M.S. 'Weymouth,' A.D. 1723, aged 47 years. This tablet is erected near Selkirk's look-out by Commodore Powell and the officers of H.M.S. 'Topaz,' A.D. 1868."

Strange to say, nearly two centuries ago Juan Fernandez was the abode of a former Robinson Crusoe, about whom little is heard now-a-days. I will, however, make an extract from Dampier, his historian, who published between the years 1697 and 1709, so few of my readers are likely to have read him for themselves:—

"March 22nd, 1684.—We came in sight of the island, Juan Fernandez, and the next day got in and anchored in a bay at the south end of the island, in twenty-five fathoms of water, not two cables' length from the shore. We presently got out our canoe, and went ashore to see for a Moskito Indian, whom we left here when we were chased hence by three Spanish ships, in the year 1681, a little before we went to Arrica; Captain Watlin being then our commander, after Captain Sharpe was turned out.

"This Indian lived here alone above two years, and although he was several times sought after by the Spaniards, who knew he was left on the island, yet they could never find him. He was in the woods hunting for goats when Captain Watlin drew off his men, and the ship was under sail before he came back to shore. He had with him his gun and a knife, with a small horn of powder, and a few shot; which, being spent, he contrived a way, by notching his knife, to saw the barrel of his gun into small pieces, wherewith he made harpoons, lances, hooks, and a long knife; heating the pieces first in

the fire, which he struck with his gun-flint and a piece of the barrel of his gun, which he hardened, having learnt to do that amongst the English. The hot pieces of iron he would hammer out and bend as he pleased with stones, and saw them with his jagged knife, or grind them to an edge by long labour, and harden them to a good temper, as there was occasion.

"All this may seem strange to those who are not acquainted with the sagacity of the Indians, but it is no more than these Moskito men are accustomed to in their own country, where they make their own fishing and striking instruments without either forge or anvil, though they spend a great deal of time about them."

Such is the interesting account given by an old buccaneer, who in after life was an officer of the Royal Navy.

The inhabitants of the island are not numerous, numbering some five and twenty in all: their principal business is trading with passing whalers, who make the island generally a place of call; in vegetables, wood, fresh meat, and water. They also have large quantities of sealkins for barter, capturing the seals on a small island called Santa Rosa, which is off the south-west extremity of Juan Fernandez. The people live in a very simple style, principally on fish and goats' meat; they dry a large quantity of the former for sale. There is a

little row of cabins built in a sheltered spot, a necessary precaution to protect the frail dwellings from the heavy storms which, at times, bursting over the island, come rushing down the narrow valleys with terrific force. Opposite each of these cabins is its garden, and all appeared to be in a flourishing condition. This produce must be thoroughly appreciated by the sailors of the whaling ships, who are often four or five months at sea without the chance of tasting anything much greener than mouldy cheese.

We spent our Christmas here. As it is the custom to give most of the men leave on that day, it is fortunate if a quiet spot can be chosen where public-houses and drinking bars—the sailor's paradise—do not abound, as indeed they do in every seaport with a town. These pitfalls and snares, so carefully laid for "poor Jack," cause many a seaman to break his leave and lose his good character; and, the downward road once begun, by unreflectingly indulging in an extra glass or two, frequently leads in a short time to imprisonment or flogging.

Our next port was Valparaiso, the most important commercial town in Chili. I hardly expected to see such a quantity of shipping as was lying in the bay; the busy work going on amongst them with cargo boats, and the number of daily arrivals and departures, spoke well for the trade of the place.

The town is backed by a range of hills, and lies between their base and the shore. The English portion, in the suburbs of the town, is more elevated, being built on the slopes of the hills some distance up.

The English residents here did not show much inclination for entertainment; rather the reverse, we thought—although comparisons are so odious—to their American cousins at San Francisco. There is, however, a good cricket club, a pastime one is always sure to find supported and practised wherever there is plenty of young English blood, as is the case at Valparaiso, where nearly all the large commercial houses employ English clerks. The principal thing to be done, as far as I could see, was to ride about the neighbouring country, an amusement the residents appear to indulge in a good deal; but one that must, necessarily, become very monotonous. Some years ago a very good pack of hounds was imported by the English residents—for the country abounds in foxes—but they have deteriorated sadly of late, through want of support and enough new blood. It was quite pitiable to see the poor mangy, listless brutes mooning about, having lost nearly all their former spirit. The huntsman told me that the dogs' energy and pluck leave them more and more every year, whilst their power of scent suffers excessively from the dry, barren, dusty nature of the country. A few fresh couples of dogs are occa-

sionally got from England, I believe, which just keep the pack going.

Valparaiso is connected by rail with Santiago, the capital of Chili, and to the latter place I determined, in company with a brother officer, to pay a visit.

We slept on shore the night before starting, as being most convenient, the train leaving at an early hour. It was fortunate we did so, as we laboured under the impression that our train took its departure from a small station situated in the interior of the town, whereas it was from the regular one, or depôt, on its outskirts. Using bribes, threats, and entreaties to our driver, on discovering our mistake, to flog his wretched horses on faster, we endeavoured to reach the proper station in time, but, as it was five minutes after the hour the train ought to have started when we got there, the doors were shut and admission refused. We were in despair, for the next train did not leave for seven hours, and took four hours longer than the express. But what is this? a ray of hope still!—we see a door standing open to one side on the station, evidently giving admittance to its precincts, though not in the legitimate way for passengers. But to it, and through it, we rushed just in time to see the train, some little way off, begin to glide with a shrill whistle on its way. There was no good giving up this chance without a struggle, so, turning on full steam, we sped

away in chase, and succeeded in just catching the guard's van, the door of which was fortunately open; into it we threw our bags and bundled in after them ourselves, much to the astonishment of the guard, who commenced with many gesticulations to rave at us in Spanish (Russian or Arabic would have been as intelligible to us). Luckily, the train was now going at full speed, so he could not put us out, and, having pacified him with a cigar, we waited patiently for our arrival at the first station to get tickets and change into a carriage.

As we got more towards the interior of the country, evidences of greater cultivation than is to be seen in the immediate neighbourhood of Valparaiso became apparent, the land being thoroughly irrigated by canals fed by the Aconcagua River, which, as it nears the sea, in consequence of this drain on it, becomes very much smaller than when it first appears from amongst the Cordilleras. The farming, so far as I could judge, is carried on in a very primitive style, and side by side with one of the foremost efforts of civilisation, the railway, may be seen the rude plough centuries old, made simply of wood, and only turning up the ground to the depth of some three inches, followed by a lazy-looking peon, who indolently guides the course of his oxen, looking as if nothing could rouse him into any great exertion; and not far off may also be seen an uninviting shed, with only three sides, run up with branches

and grass, where lives the aforesaid peon with his wife and family, besides innumerable dogs and pigs. As we get on, the fields are well enclosed with walls, built of adobes (large blocks of hardened earth, some four feet in length by two and a half), roofed over, the eaves projecting some nine inches each side, to protect them from the heavy rains. There are also long straight lines of waving poplars, planted in many places along the divisions of the fields or sides of the roads; they add a most picturesque appearance to the country, and relieve it of the flat, unvaried look these large plains must otherwise possess.

Soon after leaving a station called Llai Llai, which is a sort of half-way house where the trains stop to enable the passengers to breakfast, etc., the ascent to Santiago commences; it is very gradual, not nearly so steep apparently as the Bhore Ghaut incline near Bombay, but leads along the brink of some very ugly-looking precipices, and has some very sharp turnings in ticklish places.

Before reaching Santiago we pass over one vast level plain; for miles and miles it stretches away, with occasionally a clump of stunted trees, the tops of which gradually rise above the horizon like the mastheads of an approaching ship at sea.

At last the train approaches our destination. We glide in amongst long streets, between rows of stately poplars and bubbling streams, and are finally deposited at the Santiago railway station.

CHAPTER XI.

"Hark! as the smouldering piles with thunder fall,
A thousand shrieks for hopeless mercy call!
Earth shook—red meteors flash'd along the sky,
And conscious Nature shudder'd at the cry!"

We were astonished, as we drove to our hotel (ingles), at the width and length of the Alemeda; it is close on three miles long, I believe, and is lined with double rows of trees on each side; at intervals are statues, bandstands, etc., and between the rows of trees on either hand is a rippling stream constantly running, which thus keeps the trees verdant and blooming during the hottest weather, affording a most pleasant and refreshing shade to the walks beneath them.

As we drove along we passed the princely residence of a Mr. Maggs, the great contractor of this country. It is a handsome structure, and the grounds are most tastefully laid out. Turning off to the left, some distance further on, we got into the principal business streets of the city, and at length arrived at our hotel, where, as is often the case, English was only *professed* to be spoken; at least, no sufficiently-accomplished linguist to enlighten us

produced himself on our arrival, though we certainly did before the termination of our visit come across an individual who performed the duty of interpreter to the extent of some broken English.

However, having engaged our rooms and deposited our traps, we sallied forth for a view of the city. We noticed that the shops were larger and apparently better stocked than at Valparaiso; handsome buildings and showy warerooms were devoted to the sale of goods, all bespeaking a good demand. We were wandering on in the usual imbecile style of Englishmen who go sightseeing, but cannot speak a word of the language of the country, or make their wants known, when, being anxious to inquire the way to an hotel where our Admiral and his suite were stopping, we looked about for some charitable Samaritan who was likely to be able to speak our native tongue; we presently espied a florid, fat, good-natured-looking unmistakable son of Britain, slowly pounding his way towards us, on one leg of flesh and one of wood. He had all the appearance of being the right man in the wrong place, for, except that the good city of Santiago was the last place to see such a character, he looked for all the world like some ancient defender of Britannia's wooden walls, retired from public life on the pension allowed by a grateful country. Him we accosted with confidence, and found we were not wrong in our first supposition; but he proved to be, like

ourselves, but a visitor to the city. He asked us to accompany him to his brother's in the Bulness Arcade, where, he said, we should receive every information. After accompanying him some little way, we stopped in front of a shop devoted to the sale of fancy goods—babies' dolls, caps, etc., etc.,—the enterprising proprietor of which proved to be the brother of the gentleman with the wooden leg, our acquaintance with whom had now almost ripened into friendship; and, rejoicing in the euphonious name of Jones, he proved to be most kind and assiduous in his attentions, and, after giving us the directions we were in need of, expressed a hope that we would join in a little *soirée* that was to take place at his house that night. Naturally very glad to meet our countrymen in these regions, and to have an opportunity of learning something about the town and its inhabitants from residents, we cordially accepted his invitation, and, accordingly, after dinner at our hotel, betook ourselves to the upstairs' room of Mr. Jones's fancy goods establishment. Here we found some other gentlemen assembled, and, after the usual stimulants had been produced and partaken of, the 'armony of the evening commenced. Mrs. Jones graced the festive scene by her presence, and warbled forth one or two very pretty little songs.

Amongst the guests were two brothers named Law, who were both dentists by profession; the

elder had, however, retired some time previously, both from his profession and from Santiago, in favour of his brother. He had practised for about eleven years, during which period he had laid by a considerable sum of money. On leaving Santiago he purchased a merchant ship, called the "Great Pacific," and for some time previous to our meeting had commanded and sailed her himself. A rather peculiar transition, from dentist to merchant captain! At the time of our visit, his vessel was on her way from Valparaiso to New York, under charge of a captain he employed for the trip; from there he was going to take a cargo to England, and then fit her up to run in the coolie trade from Macao to Peru, the profitable nature of which traffic he fully detailed to me,—and which the reader will have found noticed elsewhere. Some days later, when I had known him a little longer, and had on different occasions chatted with him on the subject, he flattered me in a most unexpected manner by offering me the command of his ship (one of the largest merchant ships which had ever been in the Pacific) and a considerable share in the profits of the transaction. This kind offer I was compelled to "decline with thanks."

I was astonished to learn what a money-making business dentistry is in a country like Chili, though it is scarcely surprising when every one here appears to early ruin their masticators by an inordinate affection for sweets. The first evening I met the

Laws, the younger one showed me a note for $100 he had that day received for stopping two teeth, and for one row of false teeth he was generally paid I believe $500 or £100. During the eleven years the elder brother was at Santiago, there was, if I recollect aright, but one other dentist in the town; and Law used to clear some £3,000 a year. But many more of the brotherhood have since pitched their tents here, though there is still work for all.

We went for a drive to the mineral baths of Apoquindo, where, on a Sunday afternoon, a great many of the Santiago folk resort. On our way we passed a lordly monastery with massive belfries and arched gateway. Far-spreading fertile vineyards and every sign of prosperity and affluence generally surround the dwellings of these holy men, who, resigning the world, the flesh, and "him as shall be nameless betwixt you and me," devote themselves to the saving of other souls from perdition, and by thus exhibiting an example of total self-denial, they light the way and guide the anxious wanderer back to the narrow pathway of virtue;—at least some would have us so believe. But the visitors to Roman Catholic countries can tell another tale; for when he views their abodes and hears of the life of sensual gratification and luxury which they lead, he can only wonder at and pity the ignorance and bigotry of the poor benighted creatures upon whose superstitious natures these priests thrive. The Englishman who may thus

chance to wander, and see for himself the temporal burden and spiritual thraldom which oppress the poor in the countries of which I am speaking, may well feel thankful, and ought to raise a grateful heart in praise, for the blessings which were afforded to his own more favoured land when the light of the Reformation dispelled the darkness of Popery. We dined at the baths, and started in the evening for our drive back, which promised to be pleasant and cool, the heat, dust, and discomfort attendant on a midday drive having passed away. A beautiful sunset illumined the west. The towering peaks of the Andes and their smaller off-shoots showed their outlines clearly against the evening sky, the glorious red of the setting sun tinging the snow-tipped summits with a rich crimson; the green fields of the valleys surrounded by lines of graceful poplars, the white walls of monasteries and farm-houses with their little clusters of buildings around them, and the blue smoke curling upwards in the calm atmosphere, all formed a charming picture of peace and contentment. Would that the internal reality were on a par with the external appearance, in all these pleasant views!

When returning from spending the evening at the house of an Englishman, we visited the spot on which the Campaña church once stood,—that church, the burning of which filled every feeling person with compassion and horror. All the ruins have now been

removed, and no building is allowed on the large square. It is a desolate, barren space in the midst of a populous city. The moon was shining brightly down, all around was calm and silent, as we stood listening to our companions, who, in low tones, suitable to the narrative and the scene of the catastrophe, told us of friends they themselves had lost, of the youth and beauty which had here been charred to cinders, of the whole families swept off the face of the earth, by the one fell swoop of the destroying angel; in some cases not a living relative being left to claim the property,—"the place thereof knew them no more;"—of the fearful pictures of mortal agony which were visible through the partially opened door of the church. But to give some short account of the dreadful tragedy will perhaps be more coherent.

It was some holy day or particular service—I forget what exactly; and in Chili, as is also the case, I am afraid, in our own country, the ladies are the principal church-goers. The church was, then, filled—crowded, I believe—by all that was fervent and young and beautiful in the city of Santiago, it being the largest and most popular church in the place. To illuminate the building, and prepare it specially for this solemn service, every exertion was made. It was not considered that the ordinary lighting would be sufficient, so a number of extra lamps were suspended from a single wire extending

from one side to the other: to this, I believe, is to be attributed the subsequent conflagration.

The church was crowded, as I before said, to excess, the ladies being dressed in quantities of light muslin (crinolines were then the fashion) and decked with all the accessories used to make the female dress captivating, which it is considered as necessary to do when attending masses in Chili as when going to service in our own country. It appears that in the middle of the service the wire broke, and the contents of the lamps covered all beneath. The fire spread with fearful rapidity, and a most heartrending panic ensued. There were nearly—it is supposed there may have been more than—three thousand people in the building, few of whom got out before the tremendous pressure, caused by the rush of the frantic crowds inside, almost closed the folding-doors, which, as if to favour the devouring element, opened inwards; but through the small opening left, the eager mass, with all the energy of despair, endeavoured, of course fruitlessly, to escape. Some clambered along over the platform of tightly-wedged heads and shoulders, and, in so doing, had their clothes stripped off, the people below trying to hold them back, or draw themselves up to them. Some children were, I heard, thrown out. One man on horseback, outside, threw his lasso in, and, having succeeded in securing it round the body of some person, drew him

out by main force. This he did several times successfully, but at length the lasso settled round the neck of some victim and the head was drawn off.

But the most disgusting and revolting circumstance of all, if reports are to be implicitly believed, was the conduct of the priests. Not one of the holy men was lost. Retreating immediately into the sacristy, they closed and secured its door, thus shutting off the only other means of escape besides the principal entrance. A Miss Armstrong was the last to effect her escape by this means, and it was only through the strength given her by her desperate situation that she was successful in forcing the door as the priests were shutting it, and at the expense of all her clothing. What motive could have prompted the wanton cruelty I am unable to conceive; that such cruelty actually occurred there can be little doubt. All the vestments and furniture, down even to some worthless matting, were saved out of the sacristy, and yet the priests, in pure selfishness, or dread of being at any loss—it is hard to suggest a reason—sacrificed hundreds of their fellow beings to an awful death. The great bell after some time fell down, red hot, burying several people under it. Naturally, when the behaviour of the priests became generally known, popular feeling ran high against them, and many men were for exercising a little beneficial lynch-law; but, strange to say, the women all took their

part, and, despite their heartlessness, defended, and, in all probability, saved them.

The burning of the cathedral occurred on the 8th December, 1863, and about a month before our visit another large building was destroyed on the same day, 8th December, and which was very nearly causing as great a loss of human life. Carlotta Patti was singing; and when a star of any magnitude does shine in their firmament the Chilians attend in full force. Such was the case this evening, and some two thousand five hundred people had only left the opera-house half an hour when the flames burst forth, and entirely consumed the edifice.

The Chilians are not, as a rule, handsome, though occasionally faces are seen which retain to perfection all the attributes of the romantic Spanish type of beauty. They almost all possess, however, an exquisite carriage and grace in all their movements, which are in themselves a charm to the stranger.

My affairs being settled, and my commission having arrived—which had been a fortnight delayed, owing to the breaking down of a mail steamer—a brother officer and myself availed ourselves of the opportunity of joining two other gentlemen, who were about to cross over the Cordilleras de los Andes into the Argentine Republic. There are several different passes over the Andes, but, as our

time was limited, we chose the most direct, though, perhaps, not the most picturesque, by Uspallata. Our journey was to be performed first by train to Llai Llai, then by diligence to Santa Rosa de los Andes, and on mule back to Mendoza, after which we had the option of proceeding on horseback or by diligence across the Pampas to Rosario. We calculated the expenses of the trip would be about equal to, if not under, the cost of the ordinary passage to England in the mail steamer, *viâ* the Straits of Magellan.

Well, it is the last day of my stay in Valparaiso. I had been living on shore for some time. My traps are packed with only necessary clothing for the cross-country journey, my heavier luggage going round the Cape to meet me the other side. "My boat is on the shore, and my bark is on the sea," or, in other words, I am all ready for a start; but, before I do so, I must go and pay a farewell visit to my old ship, say a last good-bye to many, but only a long good-bye, I hope, to others of my old messmates. "Parting is such sweet sorrow," it has been said, and so, to smooth down the rough edge, and render our parting on this occasion as long as possible, I invited some dozen old messmates on shore to pass the evening with me, and finish with a supper. We kept up our festivities to such a late hour, and sang so much about "Auld Lang Syne," and being all "jolly good fellows,"

that the manager of the hotel at last turned my friends out, and assured me he would not have supplied supper for $500 if he had known there was going to be such an affectionate farewell. We were called at six o'clock next morning, and I must confess I found my head very heavy, and my eyes still hot and watery, from the effects of my grief at parting overnight, but I dressed hastily, and, swallowing an apology for breakfast, we started to catch the seven o'clock train, seated comfortably in which we commenced our journey homewards, and I—

> "With aching temples, on my hand reclin'd,
> Muse on the last farewell I leave behind."

CHAPTER XII.

"Where Andes, giant of the Western star,
With meteor standard to the winds unfurl'd,
Looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world."

Our tickets were taken for Llai Llai, where we arrived about ten o'clock, but found ourselves unable to proceed to Santa Rosa at once, no coach being obtainable. At length we got one large enough to contain the whole of our party, in number six—for two friends were accompanying us to Santa Rosa to see us off—cutting out the American minister (to Santiago) and his party, who were also waiting for means of conveyance to Santa Rosa. Our route from Llai Llai wound up the side of a steep hill, and, as we rose above the plain, we obtained a splendid view of the great fertile valley below. The harvest was being gathered in in some parts, and the process of threshing going on, which is accomplished by galloping a troop of mares round and round in a carral—the ancient method of treading out the corn.

The mares here, as in most countries of South America, are only used for this purpose, or some

other light work—never being put to saddle or draught except in extreme cases. The village of Llai Llai itself, like most Spanish built towns, looked very much better from a distance than from a close inspection. Its streets, cutting each other at right angles, looked neat and orderly; and, except just round the station, the houses only appeared at intervals, half hid amidst large gardens, which, with their quantities of fruit trees and vineyards, looked temptingly cool and inviting. The whole valley forms a large amphitheatre, enclosed on the left by the ranges of the Andes, whose summits were hid in clouds or capped with snow, while on the right their lesser offspring completed the circle. The hill we were ascending divided two valleys, and, as we crossed its ridge, an equally fertile and well cultivated country as that we had just lost sight of met our view. At the upper end of the valley we now descended into lay Santa Rosa, our resting place for the night. For nearly ten miles our road was lined almost continuously with poplars, which made it shady and tolerably cool, and the drive would have been very pleasant but for clouds of dust in which we were constantly enveloped. We changed horses twice during the afternoon, and travelled about thirty miles. We were not at all sorry when at length we trotted into the town of Santa Rosa, and alighted at our hotel, situated on one side of its pretty little plaza. Santa Rosa de los Andes is the Chilian termi-

nus of the line of route between Chili and the Argentine Republic, *viâ* the Uspallata Pass, and it is, therefore, of considerable importance. The large droves of cattle which are driven annually across from the East are put into grazing grounds in its vicinity to recruit them after their long and tedious journey over the Andes, during which they get scarcely any feeding whatever. It is also the great mule station —mules forming its principal source of wealth. All traffic by the Pass is done on them, troops of as many as two and three hundred going across at a time. Their wonderful powers of endurance on hardly any food, coupled with their capability to carry heavy loads over broken and unsafe ground—where they pick their steps with extraordinary precision and certainty—render them the only beasts of burden fit for this journey. Here we engaged ours, four for ourselves to ride, three for our luggage, three the vacqueanos rode, two spare ones, and a bell-mare which was led by the guide, and is always necessary for a troop of mules to keep them from straying, as they will follow the sound of the bell when no other means of persuasion would answer.

Somewhat later on the evening of our arrival the American minister and his party put in an appearance. He was also going across to Mendoza, and was taking a photographer, as it was his intention to spend some three weeks amongst the mountains taking views.

We had a delay of twenty-four hours at Santa Rosa, the cause of which I will shortly explain. One of our party, being duly impressed with the importance of our undertaking, had had a box packed with many of the good things of this life—potted meats, etc.—and, above all, some bottles of champagne, which we were to drink on the top of the Cumbre, as the point of highest elevation we should attain is called, and which is situated on the line of division between the two Republics. Unfortunately, however, this gentleman's servant had forgotten to send the box to the station in time for our train, owing, I believe, to the bewilderment of his faculties consequent on having got "drunk exceedingly" the night before to drown his sorrow on losing his master. A telegram had been sent from Llai Llai to forward the missing box at once, but in spite of our day's waiting we had to make up our minds to start without it, for we heard nothing more concerning it. The night before we left we had a bowl of punch brewed from Kinahan's LL, which I had brought from the flag-ship with me. One of the American minister's party (a general, of course) came over to our rooms and joined in our conviviality, so we, of course, sung Sherman's "Dashing Yankee Boys," etc., and toasted both countries, though afterwards we degenerated into a discussion on the relative value of English and

American heavy guns, which, however, ended very amicably.

We were off next morning, and the owner of our mules rode the first stage, to see us safely on our way. Our little train made quite an imposing appearance, being thirteen in number, and we, with our ponchos floating in the breeze, and broad Panama hats slouched over our faces, which gave us a very brigandish look, brought up the rear. The first stages of our march led us up the valley through which the Aconcagua flows on issuing from amongst the Andes. Side by side with the turbulent river lay our road, crossing it at times, according to the nature of the country, and gradually ascending as we went onwards. The valley was fertile and cultivated where we passed during the early part of the day, but as we progressed it narrowed and became more and more barren, till at length we found ourselves travelling a mere gorge, at the bottom of which the river tumbled and foamed, at times over a level bed, again dashing in a small cataract over a ridge of rocks, but in all cases rushing on with great velocity. The sides of the gorge were at times precipitous, at others sloping downwards, and were covered with a stunted growth of trees; but we were as yet only amongst the smaller mountains. About noon we came to the last guard-house, a small building, where some troops were stationed to levy custom duties. We halted at a little distance from it and unloaded

the mules for rest, lighted a fire, and ate the first meal of our own cooking on the journey. This halting place was some fifteen miles from Santa Rosa, and Don —— (I forget what), from whom we hired the mules, parted with us, his last words of advice and warning being to be sure and keep always close to the baggage mules, on account of robbers, as last year a party of three merchants and three peons had been attacked, and four of them killed. Having sufficiently rested, our arrieros proceeded to load the mules, and it was a source of great surprise to me, the expeditious and clever way they fastened on the heavy packs with long strips of hide, which they passed under and over and round about in a most perplexing, though skilful, manner. A mule has a cloth tied over its head during the operation of packing, which is the only way to make it stay quiet.

We were now on the road again, and had started in good earnest; the vacqueano, or guide, went merrily on ahead, leading the bell-mare, and whistling or humming tunes to himself; our spare mules came next, then the baggage mules, with the troopero driving them, then our worthy selves, four in number, all with revolvers, and two with guns at saddle-bow, ready to do and die, if need be, in defence of our property; and, lastly, our mozo, or boy, told off expressly to look after our creature comforts. Our party consisted of a Mr. W——,

going home, like myself, on promotion from the flag-ship; Mr. B——, a paymaster, also going home, on promotion from H.M.S. "Nemesis"; Mr. M——, a Valparaiso merchant; and, lastly, the 'umble writer. We were all in capital spirits, and jogged pleasantly on, looking forward to dangers and adventures which never occurred, and anticipating, as much as possible, the pleasures and pains of our undertaking. After first leaving our halting place, our road took us across the river, back some little distance along its opposite bank, and then, leaving the valley we had been travelling since morning, over the slope of a mountain into another ravine, through which the Rio de la Biscacho flows. This river is a tributary of the Aconcagua, and the spot where they unite forms a very pretty meeting of waters. This gorge was in places very picturesque, spreading out at intervals of a few miles into little plains, which were covered with trees, and at times, through defiles in the mountains, we could catch glimpses of the snow-clad ranges, amongst which we had not yet arrived. We did about fourteen miles that afternoon, and, coming to a hut, rudely built of branches and earth, we halted for the night. We had a good fire, and, opening our bag of provisions, proceeded to culinary operations at once. We had beef, mutton, onions, and potatoes bundled indiscriminately up together. I tried my hand as cook, and went in for

an Irish stew, which was rather too salt, but was pronounced otherwise very good; after it we had a glass of grog, a smoke, and then rolled ourselves up for the night in our rugs, with our pistols and money under our heads. An early start was necessary in the morning, as a long day's ride was before us. It was still dark when we were awakened by the men loading the mules with the heavy part of the luggage; so, arousing ourselves, we rolled our rugs, etc., up, and, performing our toilet at a brook, we were ready for the saddle. We got away about 5·30, our route continuing to follow the course of the river, and ascending considerably. The river ran very rapidly here indeed, but its muddy appearance—caused by the *débris* washed down from the mountain sides by the melting snow—prevented its looking so picturesque as it would have done had it been clear and sparkling. At times we were some hundred feet above the river, with, perhaps, a precipice, going sheer down to the foaming, dashing torrent beneath; at others, we were almost on its level, according as the ground afforded the safest pathway. The mountains became much grander as we got more amongst them. Often great boulders stood out from the cliffs, in gigantic masses, with, perhaps, a cleft in the centre, through which some small stream came tumbling down in a silvery thread. What struck me as being peculiar, and what certainly rendered the scenery more varied and pleasing,

was the absence of any regular range in this portion of the Andes. Every few miles or less we passed a gorge or ravine, separating huge mountains, and through which a stream, large or small, generally became tributary to the main artery we were following. These valleys always looked green and pleasant by the edge of the water.

"A ride of five hours brought us to the place where I am now writing (*i.e.*, my notes). It is one of the most charming spots possible to imagine. The valley which we have been following for the last forty-five miles (for one was but a connection of the other) ends here, and forms a regular little amphitheatre, surrounded by lofty and massive mountains, several, I believe, over 15,000 feet above where we now are. Some of the summits are clad in snow, which looks so soft and beautiful against the clear blue sky, that it makes one long to sink into it and rest awhile, it is so like a bed of down. The river is here lost in a number of smaller streams, fed principally by the snow. They are of icy coldness, and I can hardly keep my hand in for twenty seconds; they only left the snow-fields a very short time ago. A savoury mess of mutton, onions, and potatoes is stewing on the fire for breakfast, and before it is ready I am going to have a bathe in one of the streams, which will be pretty cold, I expect." After breakfast we began the regular ascent. Up to this we calculated we had ascended

some five or six thousand feet by a gradual rise, but the valley having terminated among the higher ranges, we had nothing to do but go at it in real earnest. Soon after leaving our pleasant little resting place, we crossed over a small range of hills, then over some level ground to the foot of another ascent, up that, and again over more irregular ground. We were now getting up close to the snow regions, and in many crevices and shady valleys, on a level with us, the snow was lying. Some three miles to the left of the track, and on the other side of a steep and apparently impassable line of small hills, we saw a beautiful little lake, lying imbedded amongst the mountains. It is called the Laguna de los Altos.

At length we came to the foot of a high, steep mountain, which presented to us some three thousand feet of precipice, to all appearances. I could not at first make out how we were to overcome this obstacle, but, as we got nearer, I perceived a pathway winding zig-zag up the face of it, worn into the shingle of which it was composed. The ascent was terribly steep and laborious. The baggage mules could only go on for half a minute or so, and were then compelled to stop for two or three to take breath. At times, the leading part of our line was right above—overhanging, as it were—the latter part, and if one of the mules had lost its footing it would have rolled right down on top of the others.

However, after some hour and a half of real hard work, we reached the crest of this mountain safely, and found ourselves on a rough, irregular, table-land, which lay between us and the highest ridge we had to cross. When starting, early that morning, it was warm weather, and apparently likely to remain so, and I had only a thin shirt and a light suit on, but now that we had ascended this great distance, and were exposed to the bleak cold winds which blew over the neighbouring snow-fields, together with the great rarity of the air, I suffered most intensely from the bitter cold, and it was impossible to get my warmer clothing out, as there was no time to lose, for we still had a considerable distance to go before we rested. Though this prevented my enjoying to any great extent the magnificent scenery which we beheld, it did not prevent my observing and mentally noting it, though, perhaps, more imperfectly even than usual.

While we were ascending, our thoughts and eyes were too much fixed on the bleak hill-side up which we were toiling to find time to pay any attention to the views behind us, which became more and more varied and enlarged as our altitude increased; but, halting at the apex of the mountain, which was like a huge wedge, undoubtedly one of the finest, most magnificent, and, to Europeans at least, the rarest of landscapes lay spread out before us on all sides. Behind us, in the direction from which we

had come, lay Chili. Winding away, till lost in the distance, was the long valley that we had been travelling for many hours, the gloom cast by the mountains rendering it impossible to see to the bottom of it, or distinguish the rivers; mountain after mountain succeeded each other in countless numbers as we turned towards the coast. The contrast between their dazzling summits and the darkening and dimly perceptible valleys and ravines below was most striking. For miles and miles this varied panorama spread alternately light and shade, brilliant white reflecting the evening sun and gloomy depths which the eye could not pierce. Before us lay the Argentine Republic, perhaps the most enticing picture of the two. From our very feet the mountain sloped rapidly downwards, across which slope the path was occasionally to be seen winding to the valley some five thousand feet below. The other side of this valley, right opposite to us, rising up abruptly, was a mountain of great height and grandeur; it looked quite close, so transparent was the air, and I thought I could *feel* the cold of its icy clothing, as if I were within a yard or two of some giant iceberg. Sweeping round its base, a broad valley extended to the right and left; it was brightly green, and along its centre ran a river, though only dimly to be seen, as the shades of evening were already closing round the lesser elevations. I now felt a severe headache

and dizziness, from the rarity of the atmosphere at fourteen thousand feet, and the lowness of the temperature, so I was very anxious to descend as quickly as possible to the shelter and warmth of the valley. By the time we had accomplished the descent it was nearly dark, and we had still some miles to go to arrive at a place where we hoped to find some wood to make our camp fire. We were all very weary and knocked up with the long day's ride and sudden changes of temperature through which we had passed, and I for one longed to roll myself up and enjoy nature's sweet restorer. Presently it got pitch dark where we were journeying, and one had to trust entirely to his sure-footed mule to pick its way through the rough and broken ground. But gazing upwards, the summit of the large mountain I have before mentioned was to be seen, crimsoned by the setting sun, shining like a great beacon above its lesser neighbours. Tired and hungry, we at length arrived at a kind of beehive-shaped building, with an entrance some ten feet up. Two or three of these have been built at intervals by the Government to afford shelter to travellers. The entrance is placed high, I believe, to keep out wild beasts, or prevent mules being brought in. Having clambered up to examine the interior, we found a circular room of some ten or twelve feet in diameter, into which we got our bedding and traps. But, alas! we were disappointed about the wood, and a few

armfuls of brambles was all that was obtainable. With these, however, we essayed to heat a little water, which, having got about lukewarm, we mixed some cocoa in, and, with some meat in an uncooked state, were content to satisfy the cravings of our appetites, and return to our dormitory and sleep the sleep of exhaustion. We had been fifteen hours on the road this day and passed over the most tedious and difficult part of the journey. How our mules were able to stand the fatigue is, to me, beyond understanding; the baggage ones were, of course, the heaviest laden, and to look at them as they toiled up a mountain side, amongst loose rolling shingle, one would think they could hardly last another hundred yards, for they swayed from side to side, and trembled with each fresh exertion, tottering and stumbling, but never coming down.

There was one peculiar characteristic of our route which this day's journey brought particularly to my notice, that is, the extraordinary number of bones and carcases of dead cattle which one meets at almost every turn. Very soon after leaving Santa Rosa we had begun to meet them, but this day, as we passed the foot of several precipices and steep inclines, we saw great quantities in every stage of decomposition. It is a most lucrative business driving cattle across from the Eastern side to Chili, and it is by this pass they generally cross the Andes, but some ten to

fifteen per cent. are lost, though, to judge from what I saw, I should have thought more. When they come to a turn in the track at the top of a precipice, which not unfrequently occurs, or when the pathway is very narrow and insecure, the leading ones, not seeing which way to turn, or unable to help themselves, are pushed over by the hinder ones pressing on, and so go headlong down. The gauchos have neither the inclination nor the time to look after them, if by any chance they are not killed; and so one which is only a little stunned or bruised may often lie there till it dies of starvation and thirst.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Far in the West there lies a desert land, where the mountains
Lift, through perpetual snows, their lofty and luminous summits.',

THE next day we had to start nearly as hungry as we arrived the previous night, but, fortunately, we had not a very long ride before breakfast, which we were to get at the famous Puente del Incas. Unlike the mountains through which we had passed in Chili, we now travelled along the foot of the continuous range which forms a great natural bulwark between the two Republics.

I was much struck with the number and varieties of beautiful flowers with which the smaller hills and undulating ground in the valley were covered. I gathered some eight or ten of different brilliant colours and kinds, which I hoped to bring home with me, to learn the names; but later on our servant, finding a bunch of withered, dried weeds (I suppose he considered them) amongst the baggage, and, unaware of the value I attached to them, threw them away.

The Puente del Incas is interesting, on account of its mineral springs, which are powerfully impreg-

nated with sulphur. It derives its name from its having been a favourite resort of the old kings of Chili, the healing properties of its waters, then as now, being held in high estimation, far and wide. The vacqueanos and gauchos invariably have a bath as they pass here (the only one in which they indulge during the journey, I fancy). We also determined not to let the opportunity pass; so, while our Irish stew was cooking, we took our towels and went for a bathe. We found there are several different springs, one of which supplied two baths, the upper one of which was a natural basin, worn perfectly smooth by the action of the water, the rock being turned yellow by the mineral substances it contained. It was situated in a little cave, the tops and sides of which were formed of stalactites, which hung in beautiful festoons, and would have made it a charming grotto in which to undress, only the continual dropping from the roof rather damped our admiration of it for this latter purpose. This upper bath was large enough to hold three of us comfortably; the water was at a temperature, as near as we could guess, of about 90°, and for all the world like soda-water bubbling up to the surface, and covering one all over with little globules of air. The smell of the sulphur was at first very disagreeable, but we soon got accustomed to it. We thoroughly enjoyed the water, for the atmosphere was tolerably cold; and, after some hour and a half's revelling in its warmth,

we dressed, and proceeded to discuss the aforementioned Irish stew, which, being the first regular meal we had had for four and twenty hours, we thoroughly appreciated.

Still continuing along the course of the valley, that afternoon's ride brought us to the Puente del Vacas (the Bridge of Cows), and the first signs of civilisation we had met since entering the Argentine Republic. It is a regular little oasis in the midst of a vast sterile tract of country. The owner, a man from San Juan, has very cleverly constructed a canal, by means of which he irrigates some fifteen acres or so of pasturage, and for which he charges so much per head a night to the passing trains of mules.

We here found ourselves in the lap of luxury—we actually had a table-cloth for dinner, and soup-plates, out of which we took our caswela with spoons, besides several bottles of country wine, which, although none of the best, was a treat to our thirsty throats. We slept also on a floor, which was not more than a couple of inches deep in dust.

Yes; I think nothing could equal the annoyance and discomfort we continually suffered from dust during nearly the whole of this journey, except at the highest elevations—the wind always blowing, and the dust always rising, literally impregnated us and our belongings with the subtlest particles. Dust in our eyes, throats, and noses; dust in our stews,

our grog, our bread; dust before us, behind us, and around us; and on no day did we suffer more than the day we left the Puente del Vacas and started for Uspallata. We started about 6.30 a.m., and had a journey of some twenty leagues before us. It would not be so much on a good road, or over country like the Pampas, with a fast horse; but over the broken, irregular ground—often round shingle—which we had to travel on mule-back, and attendant on our baggage, I consider that ride was almost equal in fatigue and annoyance to double the distance under favourable circumstances.

For the first thirty or forty miles our road lay partly through a defile and partly along the broad bed of a river course, which at times widened to a mile, and at others contracted to a fourth of that width. During the early part of the day we passed over the worst piece of road in the journey. It led us, in one place, regularly along the brow of a precipice—the least slip would have sent us over. Our troopero made us dismount, as he said it was not safe to ride the mules; the men also dismounted, and drove the mules on before, we following. A great number of cattle are annually lost at this point, I believe. We soon afterwards got into the dry bed of the river I mentioned above, and along this we had the most dismal, dreary, melancholy ride I ever remember in my life. Not a vestige of vegetation was to be seen anywhere; brown, rugged mountains

begirt our way; while along the valley and down the neighbouring gorges a perfect gale of wind was blowing, which raised clouds of dust from the dry sandy soil; and, as the sun poured his fierce heat down upon us, parching our throats and blistering our faces, we suffered considerably. We rode on steadily for eight hours, with only the cup of chocolate we had had before starting in the morning to support us; but at last, coming to a little mountain stream, which rushed down a ravine from the now distant snow hills, we determined to break our fast —and such a breakfast as it was, composed of charqué and onions pounded together, and full of dust. Two of us had a bathe in the cold water, which was deliciously refreshing while it lasted; but, during the process of drying, the dust and heat reduced us to nearly our former state. One of our party, Mr. W——, nearly gave in at this period. He had suffered the most severely from the heat, but after a few mouthfuls of the wretched provender provided and a little brandy, he came to again.

We continued along the same valley for some three hours more, and from the number of skeletons, dead horses, cattle, and mules which we met, we christened it the "Valley of Death." One curious object I noticed—a dead ox, with a large hole in its body; just visible at this hole was the head of a fox, also dead, and grinning out at us in a most life-like though ghastly manner.

At last, turning over a low range of hills on the left, we bade good-bye to the melancholy road we had been plodding. Soon after we had the evening's cool and refreshing shade to be thankful for, and we pushed on more rapidly and pleasantly. The moon also lent its aid to light up the neighbouring country, which, as we proceeded, showed a growth of stunted trees, besides other signs of vegetation. Some ten miles on we could distinguish the hills, through which is the Pass of Uspallata; and a little on the near side of them was the hamlet of that name, where we were to pass the night. Our poor mules seemed to know that they were approaching the end of their day's journey, and often broke into a brisk trot. Soon we got amongst irrigated enclosures; these signs of cultivation, the distant glow of fires, the barking of dogs and lowing of cattle, and at length the sound of human voices, apprised us also that we had come near to our night's rest.

At Uspallata several roads meet, it being the Eastern Terminus of the traffic across the mountains, corresponding to Santa Rosa on the west. Although it is literally amongst the Andes, roads branch off to different parts of the Argentine Republic, the two principal ones leading to Mendoza and San Juan. It is the last stage of a two days' journey from each of these places.

Quantities of cattle and mules were resting or feeding in the many enclosures in the neighbourhood

of the house; large piles of goods lay about the partio, or yard, whilst their owners and the trooperos and gauchos belonging to the herds of cattle were preparing themselves in various ways for passing the night comfortably. Some had fires lit outside the large yard in front of the house; surrounding these were groups of swarthy men, in the picturesque dress of the gaucho, which looks all the better for being a little dimly seen. Again, inside the partio were more fires, each with recumbent or standing forms around, while the mule packs of each party were piled up in a little circle, forming a partial barricade round the owner's fire. The moon was shining over all, lighting up the hill sides, and pouring in bright streams through the poplars surrounding the house.

Now supper, and then to our rugs. The following twenty-four hours we had thirty leagues to get over, as we wanted to accomplish the distance to Mendoza within the six days from Santa Rosa. So an early start in the morning, first drinking a couple of jugs of milk and eating some biscuits, obtained at the house.

About an hour after leaving we found the country change again for the worse, irrigation and vegetation ceased, and barren, treeless plains stretched away for miles on our left, whilst on the right were equally uninviting looking hills; amongst them, however, our pathway soon led us.

What strange object is this, which, rearing its head over some intervening rocks, would—were all the surrounding objects changed into big square buildings and dingy smoky piles—make one think himself in the "Black Country?" A tall chimney, and its attendant smelting house; for here we come upon the remains—or, rather, all the buildings, nearly completed—of the Mina de para Mĕio. One shaft I noticed sunk to some depth, but the speculation was abandoned, owing to its natural difficulties and the want of capital to overcome them, though very large sums were spent fruitlessly; and there remain shaft and chimney, storehouse and miner's cottage, alike deserted, not a sign of living man amongst them, thousands of feet above the level of the sea, objects only of derision to the passer-by, and a proof of the difficulties weak man meets with in endeavouring to rob the strongholds of nature of her precious stores.

Passing on from these preliminaries to mining, we presently emerged from amongst the hills on to a large plateau, covered with a dry, scant herbage. We were now on the look-out for juanackos, as they are constantly to be met with along these slopes of the Andes. Our vacqueano stops soon after getting out on the open, and, holding up his hand as a signal for caution, indicates he is in sight of game. Riding slowly up to where he stands, he shows us the tall and graceful head of a juanacko,

watching us with curiosity. To unpack my gun, put it together, and start round the foot of a sheltering incline, was the work of little more than a minute; but I was unsuccessful in getting a shot, as one of our party, moving in its direction, sent it off at once. Later on we had a most exciting chase —two of us and the troopero very nearly succeeded, after some hard galloping, in surrounding two. Unfortunately, my companion's montero (kind of saddle) slipping under his mule, he was unseated at a critical time, and our quarry got away. But the chase was a pleasure in itself—a wild hunt up hill and down dale, going with safety at great speed on our mules, down steep inclines, where a horse could hardly be ridden.

About midday we got our first glimpse of the distant Pampas, some seven thousand feet below us; they looked exactly like the sea on a hazy day, stretching away in one great unbroken flat to the horizon; immediately before us were intervening ranges of mountains, over the summits of which we were looking.

We now commenced the last descent, our path winding through wooded hills, and often along the beds of watercourses. The slopes of the mountains on this side are much less abrupt than on the other, and have more soil and vegetation. A long day's march, without anything to eat from the time of starting, brought us, at about seven p.m., to a wretched

little shanty, where we were, however, able to obtain a roast of kid's flesh, and some water and pasturage for our mules. We got a little sleep for some three hours, and then in the saddle again, about eleven p.m., to finish the remaining fifteen leagues. A bright moon fortunately shone over our path, and we felt the benefit of it fully in descending the last part of the decline, which was very rough and stony.

By sunrise we had reached the commencement of the Pampas, those mighty plains which extend from the Andes to the coast, and from the Parana to Patagonia, with hardly an elevation on them, for the low ranges about Cordoba and San Louis cannot be considered anything in comparison to their extent. We passed through a desert that possesses no one interesting feature—except perhaps to the naturalist—consisting of a dry, sandy soil, with a scant growth of thorny dwarf brush-wood; no water, no grass, no trees, and this belt of useless country extends for many miles along the foot of the Andes, lying between them and the more fertile portion of the Pampas.

Onward we wearily plodded, longing for some appearance above the dreary waste to herald our approach to Mendoza. At length we are relieved by the sight of dim lines of poplars which intercept the horizon and speak to us of hotels, cooling baths, and all the luxuries of civilisation, over which they preside as shade-giving sentinels, and so awakening

renewed energies within us. The sun's morning rays shining right in our faces, after an almost sleepless night, became an annoyance, while inward monitors reminded us that we had had but one meal—not counting the bread and milk the previous morning—during the last thirty-six hours. So as we approached the trees we felt that our privations and discomforts would soon terminate for good. But alas! how fallacious are all human expectations—how doomed to disappointment are earth-born hopes! Amongst these trees where we fondly hoped to obtain breakfast, and all the comforts of an hotel, were no such things; so we naturally felt more dejected and dispirited than before. We certainly got into a good road when we arrived at the deceptive spot, but only an occasional house met our view, surrounded by its garden. About another ten miles in the hot sun served to render us tolerably uncomfortable, before we drew up at the custom house of Mendoza to have our luggage passed; close to it smiled the wished-for entrance to the Hotel de Paris.

CHAPTER XIV.

"An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below."

I WILL commence my few remarks about Mendoza with a description of a little man through the agency I became acquainted with the town and circumstances of the dreadful earthquake which at one time caused it to be so famous. My friend—as I may call him—rejoices, if he still lives, in the name of Brown. He is a Jew, was born in Poland, and brought up, as nearly as I remember, partly in Russia and partly in England. He speaks several languages, is devotedly attached to England, and proud of being, as he considers he is, an Englishman. In business he follows the ancient and honourable profession of a barber. The great object of his life, and, in fact, the only pleasure he allows himself, as he told me one morning while cutting my hair, is to make himself agreeable to English gentlemen who travel this route (which is a rare occurrence) and enjoy their society during their stay at Mendoza. He says he cannot work whilst they are there, as he gets too excited, and feels himself above his business. The last time, previous to our visit, "he had pleasure,'

as he expresses himself, was some two years ago, when the famous traveller, Captain Burton, and a party came across.

After a welcome night's rest, I started early in the morning, accompanied by my little friend, the barber, to visit the remains of the old town. Never could one, I think, walk through scenes so speakingly sad—scenes which so completely tell their own tales of death and destruction. Confused masses of ruin piled in every shape and form; here the half of a street laid level with the ground; there a wall and chimney left standing. Now we are amongst the ruins of the principal church, where hundreds were crushed beneath great solid masses of masonry, seven or eight feet thick, which came toppling down; we pass under a graceful arch, which once led into the sacristy; a grisly, grinning line of human skulls meets us, which have been thrown in here.

"What can that man want to dig there for? Surely he is not going to plant among these old mud walls?" "No, he digs where he thinks he is most likely to find some human remains, for the sake of any jewellery or money, and thus gains a livelihood." "But are not the remains of the victims protected from pillage? I asked. "Well, no; few of the living care to spend money on the dead; so they are left to the mercy of anyone who likes to dig for the sake of what they can find." A

nice state of things in a Christian country, I thought to myself, as we wandered on through grass-grown streets, over broken walls and desolate hearths, on every hand seeing human bones, hair, and rags, lying about. One of the diggers showed us some small pieces of money he had that morning found.

What was, perhaps, the most melancholy picture of all was the deserted plaza, where once all the business and bustle of a city of nineteen thousand inhabitants were carried on. It is still surrounded by its lines of green trees, but how uncared for and straggling they look. In the centre is the broken fountain; the ground surrounding it is turned into a swamp, through the water running from its proper channel. Desolation and ruin stamp the forsaken spot.

"Tis now the raven's bleak abode;
* * * * *
And there the fox securely feeds;
And there the pois'nous adder breeds,
Conceal'd in ruins, moss, and weeds;
While, ever and anon, there fall
Huge heaps of hoary, moulder'd wall."

It is sad to think of the thousands cut off in their prime, and in the glow of youth; though one relieving thought suggests itself, hundreds were at divine service. It was the Semana Santa, or Holy-week, and at the time of the earthquake service was going on at the churches—those not attending being principally indoors. First comes a prelimi-

nary motion of the earth, terror speaks terror from face to face, and a fearful moment intervenes, then comes the great wave, and twelve thousand human beings are immured beneath tumbling walls and crumbling masonry. Like at the fire at Santiago, whole families were lost sight of. I was told of a large merchant's house, in connection with Valparaiso, which was passing through a state of bankruptcy at the time. Its debts were paid in full, and accounts cleared, by its principals and *employés* being called on to pay the great debt of nature. It is a strange feeling, to know, as one walks along over masses of masonry or the heavy roof of some church, that a ghastly multitude is sleeping below, whose death and burial came on them with lightning swiftness; for this great charnel house remains as nature left it, except what the exertions of the enterprising gentlemen of the pick and shovel are able to accomplish.

At intervals, towards the outskirts of the ruins, are the old gardens, flourishing in rank neglect; the vine, the peach, and the pear mingling in rich confusion. We went to the cabin of a poor woman who had taken up her abode amongst the old ruins, and had a very good fruit garden, for the purpose of enjoying a cool repast. Her husband was an Englishman, who had deserted her, leaving her without any means of supporting their family, so our little offering for the fruit we had was acceptable.

The new town of Mendoza is beautifully laid out, extensive gardens surrounding all the good houses, and plenty of room given between the streets. Like most of the Chilian towns, it has a good-sized stream of water running down each side of the principal street, which keeps the lines of trees with which it is lined fresh. This custom of having watercourses along the thoroughfares appears to be peculiar to towns west of the Andes, and those close to them on the eastern side. There is at present, I believe, a population of about seven thousand in Mendoza, and prior to the earthquake it was computed to be nineteen thousand, so the remnant does not appear to have increased or diminished. Our hotel was tolerably comfortable, considering the out-of-the-way town and country we were in; though the landlord troubled himself little about the wants of his guests, being a well-to-do man, and not caring much, I fancy, whether the hotel was carried on or not. He has been a large speculator in the wines grown in the Mendoza district. He has now some $100,000 worth of wines in store at the hotel, to which he has paid great attention, manipulating and maturing them. He was offered, about the time of our visit, $2,500 for 1,000 bottles of his best wine, and refused it. He says that if men who thoroughly understand the business came out to this country from Europe with capital, it could be made one of the best wine-growing coun-

tries in the world, and its wines would compete with any in the market.

The country around Mendoza is at present a great grass country, where the cattle for Chili are got into condition, preparatory to their long journey, without any pasturage, over the Andes.

At Uspallata we had heard from two travellers, one of whom was a wealthy San Juan merchant, who was acquainted with Mr. M—— of Valparaiso—a member of our party—stories of a large band of gauchos and Indians who had been committing many depredations in the surrounding country. There were said to be some forty of the former, well armed, and one hundred of the latter. These accounts we heard confirmed at Mendoza; but also that there were troops out after the brigands, and that they had shifted the field of their exploits further north to the San Juan province. All this was not very assuring, for these bands moved long distances very rapidly, and especially as, not long before, four Englishmen had been attacked at Rio Cuatro, who were travelling by diligence, as we were also about to do. However, we were all well armed; four double-barrelled guns and five revolvers promised us security against any moderate number of gauchos and Indians.

We were obliged to pay a very high price for a diligence to take us on to Villa Nueva; we endeavoured to get up competition between two or three

proprietors, but unsuccessfully; so we at length engaged one from the Messageria, which, I believe, is the largest company. We had to pay 270 dols. for a distance of about 510 miles, which the reader will not consider a high price, when he has seen the difficulty there is in obtaining horses along the route.

Our bill is paid, we have the yapa (or stirrup-cup) with the landlord, our luggage is piled up behind a large and roomy coach, which we have all to ourselves, revolvers are handy, and a couple of guns ready overhead, the others under the seat, and we are off at a merry pace, speeding pleasantly along with our five horses at full galop, and our five postilions (each horse carries one), dressed in red shirts and slouch hats, bobbing up and down, like so many peas in a pan, the capitano, or first whip, sporting a black coat. Our conductor, a most respectable and hearty old gentleman, sits in front, surrounded by small articles of luggage, amongst which are a couple of jars of Mendoza wine—our supply for the road.

Near Mendoza the country is very fertile, and streams run in all directions. The snow regions of the Andes form their reservoirs, so this neighbourhood is unaffected by drought, that dreaded visitant in most grazing countries.

At noon on the 25th January, we left Mendoza, our road to Villa Nueva taking us over Pampas, following the whole way deeply-cut wheel tracks.

We passed on through pasture lands for the first fifteen leagues, seeing a house now and then,—in all, a well-to-do looking district. At the end of that distance we arrived at a place called Ramblon, where we dined and passed the night, rolled up in the old fashion, under the verandah of a house. Next day we were up betimes and started at 5.30. We now found ourselves passing into a more barren and deserted looking district, seeing few signs of inhabitants except at the village of La Pas, where there is a small garrison, it being a frontier town. It was attacked at the time of the last great raid of Indians which occurred some two years before, when, as is often the case in these parts, the garrison all deserted to the Indians, becoming brigands and plunderers, as the easier and pleasanter life of the two. During the inroad every animal worth the trouble of driving was taken away and many of the male inhabitants murdered. Last year a terrific hailstorm occurred in the neighbourhood, at a place called the Finca de Santa Rosa; the stones are said to have been as large as a man's hand, destroying many vineyards and causing much loss.

There is little to speak of during this journey, the country over which we travelled being flat, uninteresting, and for many leagues destitute of all signs of vegetation, except a stunted brush-wood which seems to thrive wherever there is no soil, water, or other apparent necessary to vegetable existence.

The night of the second day we passed at the Rancho Totoras, having travelled thirty-five leagues since the morning. We changed horses about every three leagues; and, as a rule, enough for two more changes were sent on from the Posados (or posting-house), as they are only at long intervals, so we constantly travelled in company with our next team. On this, the second day, we had to go through twenty leagues of country, destitute of water or any support for horses; so consequently there was no Posado. Thirty horses were therefore driven on before us and halted at different spots, to be ready for us to change. Frequently the ground was so soft that the wheels sank over a foot deep in the sand, and even with the diligence emptied and the postilions dismounted, flogging on their horses, it was often with difficulty that the clumsy old vehicle was got along.

The third night we passed at San Louis, which is the capital of the province of that name. It is a poor and unimportant little town, and obliged to get all its stores, wines, &c., sent from Mendoza. The town is much the same as all others built by the Spanish-Indian race; high adobe walls enclosing fertile gardens, but everything besides them dusty, dirty, and baked-looking.

We slept this night in a dark and miserable room belonging to the building, which glories in the name of hotel. Our diligence brought us to it, as it is here they change horses and regularly stop the night.

Next morning for some leagues our road took us through the Sierra de San Louis, winding round the foot of hills and avoiding ascents as much as possible. There are a number of low ranges without any particular attraction; however, they break the monotonous level of the Pampas. This day we passed from the dried-up, miserable country through which we had been travelling into the green portion of the Pampas. Plains of fine rich pasturage stretched away as far as the eye could reach, seldom with even a gentle undulation. Occasionally we saw deer, disturbed by the diligence, rapidly disappearing towards the far off horizon. It is next to an impossibility to get within a shot of them on these level plains, where there is no cover whatever, and the only way of capturing them is by riding them down on horseback. This, although dreadfully severe on the horse, is often done by settlers and gauchos.

To-day we crossed the Rio Quinto, which is the only river of good water for many leagues. It was quite cheering to see trees and thickets once more, and all the vegetation which in this climate only grows near water. Numbers of birds were congregated in its neighbourhood, and pigeons were cooing in the trees. As I was going after these to try and get some for our pot, a large South American partridge got up, which was the first of these birds I ever shot. They are larger than our own, and very numerous over the Pampas.

This day's travelling was one of the pleasantest we had. We were often going at full gallop over smooth grass lands, our postilions shouting, joking, and laughing, plying their heavy leather thongs with might and main, and the old diligence, bumping and jumping from side to side, rolled merrily on.

However, through having had heavy, bad roads during the early part of the day, before arriving at the Rio Quinto, we only did eighteen leagues,—six short of our proper day's journey,—so we camped on the open Pampas. It is perfectly delicious, sleeping out in the fresh, balmy air of the open camp; the atmosphere was clear and dry, and the sky presented an almost Italian brilliancy. So we slumbered peacefully, our men huddled together round the coach, and ourselves some little way off, some package or a rug on bunches of grass forming our pillows. The morning air was very chilly, though; so we were up and off at five o'clock, in order to make up to some extent our short journey of the previous day.

About 7.30 we arrived at Morro, a pretty village, where we ought to have passed the night. It was quite strange to see this prosperous, pleasant-looking little town in the middle of a great wilderness. It is a regular stopping-place of the diligences. On again, after breakfast, getting into the province of Cordoba, after crossing the Rio de la Cruz. That night we stopped at a small house where we obtained some

mutton, a great help to our larder. During the evening a large number of men, with women mounted behind them, arrived. They were seeing one of their party a short way on some journey she was making, and had come here to pass the night in festivities. They had first a good supper of roast meat, washed down by aguadiente, and then having obtained the services of one of our postilions to play the guitar, they commenced dancing. It was a very measured, stately kind of performance. Sometimes a species of quadrille, during which they glided about in a most unbending manner; again they would break into a sort of old-fashioned waltz, to a pretty, and occasionally plaintive, air. The whole of their actions and behaviour being most ceremonious, formal, and courteous, almost giving a stranger the idea that they had never met before. These gaities were kept up to an early hour in the morning; but long before their finish I had sunk to sleep, stretched out on the grass, at some distance from the house.

We started at 4.30, and arrived at Rio Quarto about eleven o'clock, where we found a *table d'hôte* breakfast being served in a small hotel, supported principally by the officers of the troops stationed here. We met three young Englishmen who were doing a walking trip through part of the country, having just come from Cordoba. They were full of strange rumours which professed to be the latest

news from Europe, and as we ought to have had three weeks' later news than when we left Valparaiso, we hardly knew whether to believe the reports of Gladstone's Government being out of office, England at war with Prussia, and several other stories which we afterwards learnt were equally absurd. We did hope somewhat earlier in the journey to have reached Villa Maria (or Nueva) on this afternoon, but we now gave up all hopes of doing so, determining, however, to push on as far as we could.

CHAPTER XV.

"Clouds burst; skies flash; oh, dreadful hour!
More fiercely pours the storm!"

THAT evening's drive made me acquainted with a scene, the like of which residents in England, I do not think, have ever witnessed; for in this country no warfare of the elements ever equals that fearful letting loose of them, as it were, which so often occurs in less favoured climes. The storm I am about to speak of was an unusually fierce one, as may be supposed when the reader is informed that it was the forerunner of the first rain that had fallen for many months in the part of the country we were travelling in.

The afternoon was rather hot and sultry; as it advanced, heavy dark clouds began to appear above the horizon right before us. As evening drew on they rose heavier and heavier in a great black arch, which spread a gloom before it and caused the Pampas and all objects on them to look hazy and indistinct, totally obliterating the horizon beneath it, and giving one an uncomfortable, disagreeable feeling. Darker grew the great mass of clouds as it

overspread the heavens till premature night set in. Occasional flashes played about the clouds, lighting up for a moment the plains, and at times showing us the forms of terrified cattle and horses belonging to the estancia over which we were driving. Our road, as I before said, led us right for the thickest of the storm, and soon we found it almost impossible to see the forms of our postilions, who were urging their frightened horses on as rapidly as was consistent with safety, for the road was in deep ruts, worn into the soft grass land, and not easy to distinguish in the pitchy darkness which now enveloped us. The lightning soon became so dazzlingly brilliant as to blind one for some seconds after each flash, though there was no thunder as yet to be heard; there was scarcely a breath of wind, and this extreme quiet, only disturbed by the wild cries of our riders and the jumbling of the diligence, under these peculiar circumstances served to render the scene more impressive, and instil into one a peculiar feeling of awe.

I was by no means sorry,—in fact, I must confess I was greatly relieved,—when a bright flash lit up a ghostly-looking, square, white tower, close to which we could distinguish a low house, the dwelling, as we afterwards learnt, of Mr. Sclater, the managing partner of the large estancia over which we had been driving since leaving Rio Quarto.

Mr. S. met us with a most cordial welcome to the shelter and board of his dwelling, of which we were only too glad to avail ourselves, for though there was no rain falling yet, and if one had shut his eyes, there was nothing unusual to be felt; still it was that kind of night that an only moderately brave individual would prefer sitting in a cozy room by candle-light, and chatting to his opposite neighbour, to standing face to face with visible conflict going on amongst the elements.

Some few minutes after our arrival, however, we began to hear the thunder in the distance; it grew closer and closer, till within an hour deafening peals shook the air about us, and a heavy downfall of welcome rain commenced. I say welcome, because it put Mr. S. in great spirits. He told us that this was the first rain they had had for ten months, and was the termination of one of the longest droughts on record in the Argentine.

While our asado (or roast) was preparing, we stood for a short time in the verandah, watching the wild night outside, for we took a friendly interest in the storm now we were in comfortable quarters. We could now *enjoy* the brilliancy of the lightning, and gaze admiringly at all the changes in the clouds, as dense masses of them passing over carried this much needed restorative to the thirsty soil.

Mr. S. was heartily glad to have our companionship, as most men are who seldom see one of their

own rank in life, or meet anyone capable of exchanging two ideas beyond those purely local. After a bottle or two of very good wine, which he produced in our honour, we settled down to our grog, smoking, and a chat.

Mr. S. has suffered much from the inroads of the Indians, who, entering the Argentine on the south, cross a belt of uninhabitable country of great extent, commit many depredations on the settlers, and then retreat before any force sufficiently strong to encounter them has been collected together. The worst and most daring of these inroads occurred some two years before the time of which I am speaking. Mr. S. told me many things in connection with it, and I will give a short portion of his story:

"Previously to the time when the Indians made their great raid, I had always treated them as kindly and hospitably as I could. Parties of them, at that time, constantly travelled by this road on various errands to Rosario, and sometimes their chiefs were invited to a conference at Buenos Ayres. Now, at any time they wanted to halt here, to feed or pass the night, I used to send them firewood and what mare's meat they wanted to eat; so in time they came to look on me as a friend, and sometimes said in a half-joking way, that when they were in this part of the country driving off cattle, they would respect mine; but as they had never up

to that time made any marauding excursion, I thought, despite the entire absence of humour in their composition, they merely said it as a joke. But I was soon undeceived; for one day a number of peones and country people, with what few goods they had been able to collect, came galloping into my potero (enclosure), crying out, "Los Indios! Los Indios!" and telling a dreadful story of robbery and rapine. I hardly knew whether to believe it really was the Indians or only some party of gauchos, who often, when in want, steal from and ill-treat the poor people. However, towards evening a large body of Indians were seen advancing from the southward. Among them were many gauchos and some troops; the latter had in some cases, when the Indians approached the frontier forts, deserted, or murdered their officers, and gone over *en masse* to the enemy. These Christians (as they are termed, to distinguish them from the Indians), were responsible for all the cruelty and bloodshed during the incursion; the sole object of the Indians being plunder, and having no hatred or spite to gratify, they would have driven away horses and cattle, and left human beings unmolested, but it was otherwise with these *Christians!*

The evening they arrived on my estancia they were driving a lot of stock before them. They soon surrounded the buildings and sent parties to the neighbouring country to drive in more cattle. The

only benefit I derived from my former kindness, was in their not molesting my servants or their wives, or taking anything from the house; but my cattle and horses shared the common fate. Off this estancia they drove about sixteen hundred horses and eleven hundred head of cattle, leaving me only such as they could not conveniently go after, and such as were weak or thin, and did not appear equal to the journey across the tract of desert which lies between this and the Indians' country.

"It was after this visit of theirs that I had that fort built as a protection for myself and my people, against any further attacks."

It was this fort that I had first seen lighted up by a flash of lightning on our arrival that evening. It was a simple square substantial building, with a door high up, and would I believe afford perfect protection, as the Indians are very much afraid of fire-arms, when used from behind any covering.

Mr. S—— told us his estancia contained forty-eight square leagues of country; not a bad-sized property.

When we started next morning, the rain was steadily coming down, but the old diligence was fortunately water-proof, and our men were the only ones that suffered from wet; but they seemed as cheerful and jolly as ever, although their clothing clung dripping to them.

The country seemed to have already somewhat

benefited by the much wanted rain; its dried, parched-up look had vanished, and a greenish tint could be distinguished. It also changed considerably in its character: first bushes, then small trees, appeared, and finally we found ourselves travelling through a pretty park-like district.

We stopped at a native house to cook some breakfast; and in the afternoon arrived at Villa Maria, having taken seven, instead of six, days to do the 510 miles; but this was principally owing to the great drought that there had been, which, in some cases caused us long delays, horses having to be sent for to a considerable distance, the usual supplies of water having failed.

We heard at Villa Maria that two diligence loads of passengers for Mendoza had been detained for a fortnight on account of the bands of gauchos and Indians. The Messageria company refusing to allow their diligences to start, and prefering to pay the hotel expenses of all the passengers, while they were waiting. These two diligences we had met in the Pampas, a day or two previously.

The first train starting for Rosario, after our arrival, was at twelve o'clock the next day; so during the interval, we put up at an hotel in connection with the railway station. A *table d'hôte* was spread on tables on the platform of the station, and the employés of the railway sat down with us. A capital table was kept, fresh fish, sent up from Rosario, being

an especial treat to us; a good light claret was put on as free table-wine, and the charge made was very moderate.

We were not sorry to be once more in a civilized conveyance, as we moved away from Villa Maria station in the train, chatting over mishaps and annoyances now passed and done with, and rather looking forward to the comforts and little luxuries of cities, which Englishmen know so well how to appreciate.

And now, having arrived at the *bona fide* haunts of man once more, having shaken the dust of the desert off our feet, dressed decently and prepared for again entering a civilised portion of the world, I would wish to say a word or two about my short sojourn in the wilderness, far from every anxiety beyond providing for the animal necessaries of life.

To ask if I really enjoyed the journey—which I have been endeavouring shortly to describe—as a whole, would, I fear, extract an answer in the negative; but, at the same time, I must record that I did enjoy some portions of it very much, and had we had plenty of time at our disposal, and all the party been sportsmen, we might have enjoyed it still more: for to have wandered at will through valleys and ravines amid the Andes, enjoying their wildly beautiful scenery, camping in favourable spots and trusting to our guns to keep the pot boiling, would have thoroughly recompensed us for the trouble of getting

there, and to an artist or photographer would have afforded opportunities of taking or sketching views, which, of their kind, are not to be equalled in the world. But in musing on what might have been, I am forgetting my intention of speaking of what was. The scenery which we did see was splendid; and the very fact of being amongst those majestic mountains—thousands of feet above the sea—far away from any trace of civilisation, gave elasticity to the spirits and mind, which, although it cannot come under the category of positive enjoyment, was certainly pleasurable feeling. Also travelling where few of one's countrymen have travelled, where all is novel, and constant changes occurring in the route, one is compensated to a great extent for long marches and uncomfortable "board and lodging." So, on the whole, I would advise an enquirer—if any such be—to go the trip once, but I think—like myself—he would decline doing so again, unless with some time at his disposal, and an inclination to go in for the digressions from the regular journey, which I have mentioned.

But *revenons à nos montons*. The land on both sides of the railway, to the extent of, I believe, three leagues, has been granted by charter to the company, and of course they offer many inducements to emigrants or settlers in search of land, to come on to their property. We constantly passed horses, cattle, and other signs that the country was occupied.

The railway stations, as a rule, have a few houses in their neighbourhood, used by the employés of the company or as stores, but we rarely saw the dwelling of an estanciero; though at times they themselves were to be seen in riding-boots and the rough dress of the camp, and revolvers in belt.

Some time before arriving at Rosario night closed in, and we saw a very pretty sight, though one common enough on the Pampas. Smoke had been drifting along the horizon during the twilight, and, as we advanced, we came in sight of its origin—a low, bright line of fire, which was sweeping over the country, feeding on the tall, dry grass. It did not burn very high, but the overhanging canopy of dense smoke, with the bright line underneath, had a very pleasing effect.

Like a sheet of liquid silver the broad Parana now came in sight, showing our proximity to Rosario. The moon was shining brightly on its placid surface, and it looked most invitingly cool and tempting after our long and monotonous journey over hot and dusty plains. When we arrived at the station we were besieged by a host of applicants for employment in transferring our persons and luggage to an hotel. Our stay at Rosario was short, and I had not time to notice anything worth recording about the town. There is plenty of business transacted here, as it is the centre of all the up-country trade. We left Rosario on the day succeeding our

arrival, in one of the river steamboats which ply between it and Buenos Ayres, calling at several intermediate towns.

I have travelled in palanquins in India and China, have been jolted in a primitive Japanese conveyance (the name of which I forget), I have enjoyed the spicy breezes of Ceylon while travelling beneath the shade of her forest trees, I have galloped over a Persian desert and seen the weary caravan resting, the camels glad of even a sandy bed; during my career I have visited most countries in the world, and "progressed" by all the ordinary, and some of extraordinary, means of conveyance employed in them, and have ploughed the "briny" in yachts, merchantmen, and men-of-war, but before all these, for a pleasant way of getting over the distance, give me a clean, comfortable steamer, speeding along a picturesque river. There is a charm in the ever-changing landscape never long enough before you to get tired of it; in the cool breeze on the calmest and sunniest day, in the gentle ripple of the water from the bows. In the very fact of being free from dust and dirt, from tired horses and the dozen little annoyances incidental to motion when the motive power depends on flesh and blood, from heavy roads and drunken coachmen, from robbers, wild beasts, and railway collisions, whilst, above all, no unpleasant upheaving of the internals reminds the landsman that he is afloat.

The Parana opposite to Rosario is some thirty miles in width, but filled up, to a great extent, with a number of islands; over some of these were many horses and cattle grazing, and flocks of wild ducks were constantly disturbed from their reedy shores by the noise of the steamer. The right bank of the river was high with some low-lying land immediately along the shore. We passed some towns prettily built on the summit and slope of the bank. San Nicholas was especially noticeable through its picturesque and English-like appearance.

On awaking next morning we found ourselves moored alongside a wharf, some way up a small tributary of the Rio de la Plata, or River Plate, as it is commonly called. Landing with our goods and chattels, we found a train ready to convey us to the environs of Buenos Ayres.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Enough! it boots not on the past to dwell,—
Fair scenes of other lands a long farewell."

THE Capital of the great Argentine Republic, Buenos Ayres, is not a particularly interesting city for a visit of more than a day or two, and I was not sorry when the day of our departure arrived.

I was kindly made a visiting member of two clubs, which was a great boon, as time would otherwise have hung heavily on my hands. I visited the lions of the place, rode out to one of the salederos, or great slaughter-houses, where they were killing and skinning lean and miserable cattle by the hundred, and rapidly slicing off the little meat that was on them, which was then hung up in long strips to dry, preparatory for exportation to the Brazils, for the use of the slaves and for home consumption among the poorer classes. These slaughter-houses, from which Buenos Ayres and neighbouring estates derive so much wealth, are certainly a most revolting sight to the stranger.

The peones, with their sleeves rolled up, wading

about in pools of blood and smeared all over with it, wielding their huge knives in such an artistic way that it would be enough to frighten timid persons out of their five senses, if not previously prepared for the spectacle, and then shouldering masses of the still almost quivering flesh, and carrying it to the drying-sheds. Others, equally sanguinary looking, wheel away the hides and refuse, while channels flowing with blood run at the side of the slaughtering shed. The stench also arising from such wholesale massacres, added to these sights, makes one care little for a second visit. The fact is, I think I saw pretty well all that was to be seen, but will not delay to give descriptions, as I want to press on with my readers over the many miles we have to travel before reaching home, where I wish to leave him safe and comfortable at the end of this chapter.

Yellow fever had just began to make its unwelcome presence felt at Buenos Ayres at the time of our arrival. The little cloud had appeared in the horizon—the faint murmur of the coming storm was heard. These few cases were the commencement of that dreadful scourge which was destined in so short a time to make so many hearths and homes desolate, sweep off its thousands, stop all mercantile life in the city, and change the busy voice of its inhabitants to a prolonged wail of terror and distress.

Previously to the period I am writing of, but few deaths had occurred, and they had been hushed up

and made as little of by the authorities as possible; but the time had now come when they were compelled to acknowledge the stern fact that the dread enemy had established his position in their midst.

When the official announcement became known, intimation arrived from other ports on the river that ships and vessels from the infected city must undergo quarantine. It had been our intention to have gone to Monte Video and proceeded thence to England in one of the Pacific Steam Company's ships, as being most convenient for us in its sailing, and also as it was the steamer which was conveying our heavy luggage round the Cape from Valparaiso, but quarantine being established changed our decision; for the discomforts and horrors of a few days even in quarantine at Monte Video were painted to us in most striking colours; and though they may have been a little exaggerated, we had no wish to test the accuracy of the account. So we determined to bide our time until the sailing of the next Royal Mail Company's steamer from the roadstead of Buenos Ayres.

On the day of sailing a small steamer conveyed us from the wharf to the mail steamer, which soon after weighed and proceeded for Monte Video, at which port we found ourselves next morning. Here, of course, communication with the shore was stopped, so far as landing for us was concerned. Our principal occupation during the day being to watch the

cargo-boats as they came off from the shore. As soon as they were alongside, the men in them got into smaller boats and lay off, while the sailors from the steamer went down to sling the bales and get the cargo on board. At last the disagreeable, though necessary, delay is finished; mails and a few fresh passengers are on board, we let go our moorings, steam away down the broad estuary of the Rio de la Plata, soon losing sight of the white walls of Monte Video, and feel ourselves homeward bound in real earnest at last.

Lengthy descriptions of passengers on board ship, and records of their doings, have been so frequently and ably given, and what is written of one passenger-ship is applicable in so many ways to another, that I do not intend, novice as I am in mail steamer travelling, to attempt to tread the well-worn path and depict again the numberless scenes comically entertaining which are so constantly occurring. So I will only present to the reader, who has had sufficient powers of endurance to accompany me so far, a slight sketch of my fellow citizens for the time being of that little floating town, "The Douro."

Our company was composed of what I suppose are the usual elements to be found on board mail steamers from the Plate, unsuccessful votaries at the shrine of the fickle goddess in the great territory we were leaving behind us, and others on whom she had richly showered her favours; but these last

bore a very small proportion to the former. Some Brazilians, among whom was Señor Paranhos, who had just been recalled from the Argentine to form a ministry in the Brazils—the ministry to which, if I am not mistaken, the slaves of that vast empire owe their emancipation. He was an intellectual-looking man, of most polished and agreeable manners, and looked to me much more like "a fine old English gentleman" than a Brazilian. We had one woman following a husband absconding from his creditors, and another who was leaving a husband behind. There was also a gentleman who had been through the Crimean war in our army, and afterwards gone out to Paraguay in the service of Lopez; he remained faithful to him through good and bad fortune, and for some time before the culmination of that madly daring attempt of a puny republic to uphold what she considered her rights against the Brazils and her allies, he had occupied the position of director-general of hospitals to Lopez's army—an empty title enough, some may now say. With this gentleman I became as intimate as one well could in a month's voyage, and many an hour we sat together enjoying our cigars in the cool night air in the tropics, while he entertained me with tales of siege and battle, of disasters and retreats, narrating many stirring incidents of the part he had taken in them; for, though nominally in the civil branch, he constantly assumed executive command as occasion required.

There was another gentleman, a doctor also, who had formerly been in Lopez's service, whose name might have been seen soon after our arrival in England figuring in the reports of the law courts of Scotland, in connection, I believe, with the will of Lopez, and in which stakes of considerable value were at issue. Witnesses of his were among the passengers, and a legal gentleman who had been collecting evidence on his behalf in Paraguay. There was a young man who had been sent out by a London house to visit El Gran Chaco, and see about founding a colony there. He was now on his way home to take out a number of families. Since his return to South America with these emigrants, I have seen an account of his murder by the Indians in a raid on the colony he was founder of. There were, of course, many others interesting at the time or otherwise who have almost all passed from my memory.

A newspaper was started, as is often done amongst passengers who have little to occupy them, as a safety-valve for the exhuberant genius of the writing, and a supposed source of amusement for the non-writing public; but, I fear, there were more articles than readers, and I think it died a natural death after its first publication. The worthy Scot, whom I before mentioned as the legal gentleman, undertook the editorship, and it was not through want of zeal on his part that the "Douro Herald" ceased to exist.

What a magnificent harbour is that of Rio de Janeiro, both for accommodation and scenery, from a nautical and artistic point of view. Steaming in through its narrow entrance, a long, winding sheet of water lies before one; ranges of hills on the left, studded with pretty suburban villas, which peep out coyly from the midst of gardens and shrubberies; further on, on the same hand, the spires and towers of the city rise. We steamed up the harbour and went alongside a wharf at a coaling island. The "Douro" was no sooner moored than many of us made a rush for the boats which were crowding alongside to convey us to the mainland, and started off to pay a visit to the capital of the fertile and wealthy Brazils.

The Carnival was in full swing, and I must candidly confess that, though new to me, it proved anything but entertaining, and I never wish to see such a spectacle of idiotic buffoonery again. Some of the decorations and dresses were pretty enough, but the antics and conduct of the actors in the various performances and displays in the streets were, to my taste, simply disgusting. The amusements and entertainments of the higher classes of the inhabitants I had, of course, no opportunity of observing.

The feather-flower shops at Rio are well worth a visit; the gardens, and many pretty spots in the neighbourhood, also repay the traveller who has a

few days to spare for going. But a fairer and happier land to myself and companions lay before us, and we felt no regret at not having the time to extend our rambles very far inland, or when the screw again commenced its monotonous revolutions, much as there is to admire and interest in the lovely Brazils.

Onward we glide over the glassy sea, rapidly shortening our distance from Bahia. Arrived there, many of us laid in a stock of its gigantic oranges; some pine-apples and bananas also were not forgotten for those at home.

From the Brazils we had a large addition to our number of passengers, and no very pleasant one either, as the majority of them were Portuguese, by no means desirable companions on board ship.

At last we are fairly in for our run across the Atlantic, and the interest in the daily distance run increases greatly. Fair winds are more devoutly wished for, and head winds more fervently abused. As the nights lengthen and get colder, and the land of promise gets steadily though almost imperceptibly nearer, one gradually begins to realize that we shall soon be at home once more. Awaking more and more from that dreamy, misty state one generally gets into about places and people still distant, but among whom he expects soon to be, one thinks more and more of the old home—of the one hearth above all others, around which

gathered the families, faces, and voices he hopes to see and hear again ere long—he anticipates, in imagination, the kindly, loving welcome, which makes him feel each time he experiences it, that wherever his lot may call him, or whatever the amount of pleasure or happiness he may have been fortunate enough to meet with elsewhere, that there still is no place like home.

We experienced strong head winds nearly the whole way to St. Vincent, where we stopped to coal, proceeding from thence to Lisbon. Here I should have liked to have had a run on shore, and visited the town which was well-known to me in bygone days, when wintering up the "Muddy Tagus" in Her Majesty's Channel Squadron; but the inexorable quarantine kept us prisoners, and we went very little further in than Belem Castle.

The land we are bound for is now in sight. We approach it rapidly, and are soon steaming up Southampton Waters. A small steamer brings us news of what has been lately happening, and takes the ready passengers on shore. And the eager longings felt to be off to those we left behind us when last outward bound, are about to be gratified at last.

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